



THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

The Concord Edition

EXCURSIONS
POEMS
AND
FAMILIAR LETTERS

BY
HENRY D. THOREAU



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AND
POEMS

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EXCURSIONS

A YANKEE IN CANADA

New England is by some affirmed to be an island, bounded on the north with the River Canada (so called from Monsieur Cane). — JOSSELYN'S RARITIES.

And still older, in Thomas Morton's "New English Canaan," published in 1632, it is said, on page 97, "From this Lake [Erocoise] Northwards is derived the famous River of Canada, so named, of Monsier de Cane, a French Lord, who first planted a colony of French in America."

A YANKEE IN CANADA

CHAPTER I

CONCORD TO MONTREAL

I FEAR that I have not got much to say about Canada, not having seen much; what I got by going to Canada was a cold. I left Concord, Massachusetts, Wednesday morning, September 25th, 1850, for Quebec. Fare, seven dollars there and back; distance from Boston, five hundred and ten miles; being obliged to leave Montreal on the return as soon as Friday, October 4th, or within ten days. I will not stop to tell the reader the names of my fellow-travelers; there were said to be fifteen hundred of them. I wished only to be set down in Canada, and take one honest walk there as I might in Concord woods of an afternoon.

The country was new to me beyond Fitchburg. In Ashburnham and afterward, as we were whirled rapidly along, I noticed the woodbine (*Ampelopsis quinquefolia*), its leaves now changed, for the most part on dead trees, draping them like a red scarf. It was a little exciting, suggesting bloodshed, or at least a military life, like an epaulet or sash, as if it were dyed with the blood of the trees whose wounds it was inadequate to stanch. For now the bloody autumn was come, and an Indian warfare was waged through the forest. These military trees appeared very numerous, for our rapid progress con-

nected those that were even some miles apart. Does the woodbine prefer the elm? The first view of Monadnock was obtained five or six miles this side of Fitzwilliam, but nearest and best at Troy and beyond. Then there were the Troy cuts and embankments. Keene Street strikes the traveler favorably, it is so wide, level, straight, and long. I have heard one of my relatives, who was born and bred there, say that you could see a chicken run across it a mile off. I have also been told that when this town was settled they laid out a street four rods wide, but at a subsequent meeting of the proprietors one rose and remarked, "We have plenty of land, why not make the street eight rods wide?" and so they voted that it should be eight rods wide, and the town is known far and near for its handsome street. It was a cheap way of securing comfort, as well as fame, and I wish that all new towns would take pattern from this. It is best to lay our plans widely in youth, for then land is cheap, and it is but too easy to contract our views afterward. Youths so laid out, with broad avenues and parks, that they may make handsome and liberal old men! Show me a youth whose mind is like some Washington city of magnificent distances, prepared for the most remotely successful and glorious life after all, when those spaces shall be built over and the idea of the founder be realized. I trust that every New England boy will begin by laying out a Keene Street through his head, eight rods wide. I know one such Washington city of a man, whose lots as yet are only surveyed and staked out, and, except a cluster of shanties here and there, only the Capitol stands there for all structures,

and any day you may see from afar his princely idea borne coachwise along the spacious but yet empty avenues. Keene is built on a remarkably large and level interval, like the bed of a lake, and the surrounding hills, which are remote from its street, must afford some good walks. The scenery of mountain towns is commonly too much crowded. A town which is built on a plain of some extent, with an open horizon, and surrounded by hills at a distance, affords the best walks and views.

As we travel northwest up the country, sugar maples, beeches, birches, hemlocks, spruce, butternuts, and ash trees prevail more and more. To the rapid traveler the number of elms in a town is the measure of its civility. One man in the cars has a bottle full of some liquor. The whole company smile whenever it is exhibited. I find no difficulty in containing myself. The Westmoreland country looked attractive. I heard a passenger giving the very obvious derivation of this name, Westmore-land, as if it were purely American, and he had made a discovery; but I thought of "my cousin Westmoreland" in England. Every one will remember the approach to Bellows Falls, under a high cliff which rises from the Connecticut. I was disappointed in the size of the river here; it appeared shrunk to a mere mountain-stream. The water was evidently very low. The rivers which we had crossed this forenoon possessed more of the character of mountain-streams than those in the vicinity of Concord, and I was surprised to see everywhere traces of recent freshets, which had carried away bridges and injured the railroad, though I had heard

nothing of it. In Ludlow, Mount Holly, and beyond, there is interesting mountain scenery, not rugged and stupendous, but such as you could easily ramble over, — long, narrow, mountain vales through which to see the horizon. You are in the midst of the Green Mountains. A few more elevated blue peaks are seen from the neighborhood of Mount Holly; perhaps Killington Peak is one. Sometimes, as on the Western Railroad, you are whirled over mountainous embankments, from which the scared horses in the valleys appear diminished to hounds. All the hills blush; I think that autumn must be the best season to journey over even the *Green Mountains*. You frequently exclaim to yourself, What *red* maples! The sugar maple is not so red. You see some of the latter with rosy spots or cheeks only, blushing on one side like fruit, while all the rest of the tree is green, proving either some partiality in the light or frosts or some prematurity in particular branches. Tall and slender ash trees, whose foliage is turned to a dark mulberry color, are frequent. The butternut, which is a remarkably spreading tree, is turned completely yellow, thus proving its relation to the hickories. I was also struck by the bright yellow tints of the yellow birch. The sugar maple is remarkable for its clean ankle. The groves of these trees looked like vast forest sheds, their branches stopping short at a uniform height, four or five feet from the ground, like eaves, as if they had been trimmed by art, so that you could look under and through the whole grove with its leafy canopy, as under a tent whose curtain is raised.

As you approach Lake Champlain you begin to see

the New York mountains. The first view of the lake at Vergennes is impressive, but rather from association than from any peculiarity in the scenery. It lies there so small (not appearing in that proportion to the width of the State that it does on the map), but beautifully quiet, like a picture of the Lake of Lucerne on a music-box, where you trace the name of Lucerne among the foliage; far more ideal than ever it looked on the map. It does not say, "Here I am, Lake Champlain," as the conductor might for it, but having studied the geography thirty years, you crossed over a hill one afternoon and beheld it. But it is only a glimpse that you get here. At Burlington you rush to a wharf and go on board a steamboat, two hundred and thirty-two miles from Boston. We left Concord at twenty minutes before eight in the morning, and were in Burlington about six at night, but too late to see the lake. We got our first fair view of the lake at dawn, just before reaching Plattsburg, and saw blue ranges of mountains on either hand, in New York and in Vermont, the former especially grand. A few white schooners, like gulls, were seen in the distance, for it is not waste and solitary like a lake in Tartary; but it was such a view as leaves not much to be said; indeed, I have postponed Lake Champlain to another day.

The oldest reference to these waters that I have yet seen is in the account of Cartier's discovery and exploration of the St. Lawrence in 1535. Samuel Champlain actually discovered and paddled up the lake in July, 1609, eleven years before the settlement of Plymouth, accompanying a war-party of the Canadian

Indians against the Iroquois. He describes the islands in it as not inhabited, although they are pleasant, — on account of the continual wars of the Indians, in consequence of which they withdraw from the rivers and lakes into the depths of the land, that they may not be surprised. “Continuing our course,” says he, “in this lake, on the western side, viewing the country, I saw on the eastern side very high mountains, where there was snow on the summit. I inquired of the savages if those places were inhabited. They replied that they were, and that they were Iroquois, and that in those places there were beautiful valleys and plains fertile in corn, such as I have eaten in this country, with an infinity of other fruits.” This is the earliest account of what is now Vermont.

The number of French-Canadian gentlemen and ladies among the passengers, and the sound of the French language, advertised us by this time that we were being whirled towards some foreign vortex. And now we have left Rouse’s Point, and entered the Sorel River, and passed the invisible barrier between the States and Canada. The shores of the Sorel, Richelieu, or St. John’s River are flat and reedy, where I had expected something more rough and mountainous for a natural boundary between two nations. Yet I saw a difference at once, in the few huts, in the pirogues on the shore, and as it were, in the shore itself. This was an interesting scenery to me, and the very reeds or rushes in the shallow water and the tree-tops in the swamps have left a pleasing impression. We had still a distant view behind us of two or three blue moun-

tains in Vermont and New York. About nine o'clock in the forenoon we reached St. John's, an old frontier post three hundred and six miles from Boston, and twenty-four from Montreal. We now discovered that we were in a foreign country, in a station-house of another nation. This building was a barn-like structure, looking as if it were the work of the villagers combined, like a log house in a new settlement. My attention was caught by the double advertisements in French and English fastened to its posts, by the formality of the English, and the covert or open reference to their queen and the British lion. No gentlemanly conductor appeared, none whom you would know to be the conductor by his dress and demeanor; but ere long we began to see here and there a solid, red-faced, burly-looking Englishman, a little porsy perhaps, who made us ashamed of ourselves and our thin and nervous countrymen, — a grandfatherly personage, at home in his greatcoat, who looked as if he might be a stage proprietor, certainly a railroad director, and knew, or had a right to know, when the cars did start. Then there were two or three pale-faced, black-eyed, loquacious Canadian-French gentlemen there, shrugging their shoulders; pitted as if they had all had the small-pox. In the meanwhile some soldiers, redcoats, belonging to the barracks near by, were turned out to be drilled. At every important point in our route the soldiers showed themselves ready for us; though they were evidently rather raw recruits here, they manœuvred far better than our soldiers; yet, as usual, I heard some Yankees talk as if they were no great shakes, and they

had seen the Acton Blues manœuvre as well. The officers spoke sharply to them, and appeared to be doing their part thoroughly. I heard one suddenly coming to the rear, exclaim, "Michael Donouy, take his name!" though I could not see what the latter did or omitted to do. It was whispered that Michael Donouy would have to suffer for that. I heard some of our party discussing the possibility of their driving these troops off the field with their umbrellas. I thought that the Yankee, though undisciplined, had this advantage at least, that he especially is a man who, everywhere and under all circumstances, is fully resolved to better his condition essentially, and therefore he could afford to be beaten at first; while the virtue of the Irishman, and to a great extent the Englishman, consists in merely maintaining his ground or condition. The Canadians here, a rather poor-looking race, clad in gray homespun, which gave them the appearance of being covered with dust, were riding about in caleches and small one-horse carts called charettes. The Yankees assumed that all the riders were racing, or at least exhibiting the paces of their horses, and saluted them accordingly. We saw but little of the village here, for nobody could tell us when the cars would start; that was kept a profound secret, perhaps for political reasons; and therefore we were tied to our seats. The inhabitants of St. John's and vicinity are described by an English traveler as "singularly unprepossessing," and before completing his period he adds, "besides, they are generally very much disaffected to the British crown." I suspect that that "besides" should have been a because.

At length, about noon, the cars began to roll towards La Prairie. The whole distance of fifteen miles was over a remarkably level country, resembling a Western prairie, with the mountains about Chambly visible in the northeast. This novel but monotonous scenery was exciting. At La Prairie we first took notice of the tinned roofs, but above all of the St. Lawrence, which looked like a lake; in fact it is considerably expanded here; it was nine miles across diagonally to Montreal. Mount Royal in the rear of the city, and the island of St. Helen's opposite to it, were now conspicuous. We could also see the Sault St. Louis about five miles up the river, and the Sault Norman still farther eastward. The former are described as the most considerable rapids in the St. Lawrence; but we could see merely a gleam of light there as from a cobweb in the sun. Soon the city of Montreal was discovered with its tin roofs shining afar. Their reflections fell on the eye like a clash of cymbals on the ear. Above all the church of Notre Dame was conspicuous, and anon the Bonsecours market-house, occupying a commanding position on the quay, in the rear of the shipping. This city makes the more favorable impression from being approached by water, and also being built of stone, a gray limestone found on the island. Here, after traveling directly inland the whole breadth of New England, we had struck upon a city's harbor, — it made on me the impression of a seaport, — to which ships of six hundred tons can ascend, and where vessels drawing fifteen feet lie close to the wharf, five hundred and forty miles from the Gulf, the St. Lawrence being here two miles wide.

There was a great crowd assembled on the ferry-boat wharf and on the quay to receive the Yankees, and flags of all colors were streaming from the vessels to celebrate their arrival. When the gun was fired, the gentry hurrahed again and again, and then the Canadian caleche-drivers, who were most interested in the matter, and who, I perceived, were separated from the former by a fence, hurrahed their welcome; first the broadcloth, then the homespun.

It was early in the afternoon when we stepped ashore. With a single companion, I soon found my way to the church of Notre Dame. I saw that it was of great size and signified something. It is said to be the largest ecclesiastical structure in North America, and can seat ten thousand. It is two hundred and fifty-five and a half feet long, and the groined ceiling is eighty feet above your head. The Catholic are the only churches which I have seen worth remembering, which are not almost wholly profane. I do not speak only of the rich and splendid like this, but of the humblest of them as well. Coming from the hurrahing mob and the rattling carriages, we pushed aside the listed door of this church, and found ourselves instantly in an atmosphere which might be sacred to thought and religion, if one had any. There sat one or two women who had stolen a moment from the concerns of the day, as they were passing; but, if there had been fifty people there, it would still have been the most solitary place imaginable. They did not look up at us, nor did one regard another. We walked softly down the broad aisle with our hats in our hands. Presently came in a troop of Canadians, in their home-

spun, who had come to the city in the boat with us, and one and all kneeled down in the aisle before the high altar to their devotions, somewhat awkwardly, as cattle prepare to lie down, and there we left them. As if you were to catch some farmer's sons from Marlborough, come to cattle-show, silently kneeling in Concord meeting-house some Wednesday! Would there not soon be a mob peeping in at the windows? It is true, these Roman Catholics, priests and all, impress me as a people who have fallen far behind the significance of their symbols. It is as if an ox had strayed into a church and were trying to bethink himself. Nevertheless, they are capable of reverence; but we Yankees are a people in whom this sentiment has nearly died out, and in this respect we cannot bethink ourselves even as oxen. I did not mind the pictures nor the candles, whether tallow or tin. Those of the former which I looked at appeared tawdry. It matters little to me whether the pictures are by a neophyte of the Algonquin or the Italian tribe. But I was impressed by the quiet, religious atmosphere of the place. It was a great cave in the midst of a city; and what were the altars and the tinsel but the sparkling stalactites, into which you entered in a moment, and where the still atmosphere and the sombre light disposed to serious and profitable thought? Such a cave at hand, which you can enter any day, is worth a thousand of our churches which are open only Sundays, hardly long enough for an airing, and then filled with a bustling congregation, — a church where the priest is the least part, where you do your own preaching, where the universe preaches to

you and can be heard. I am not sure but this Catholic religion would be an admirable one if the priest were quite omitted. I think that I might go to church myself some Monday, if I lived in a city where there was such a one to go to. In Concord, to be sure, we do not need such. Our forests are such a church, far grander and more sacred. We dare not leave *our* meeting-houses open for fear they would be profaned. Such a cave, such a shrine, in one of our groves, for instance, how long would it be respected? for what purposes would it be entered, by such baboons as we are? I think of its value not only to religion, but to philosophy and to poetry; besides a reading-room, to have a thinking-room in every city! Perchance the time will come when every house even will have not only its sleeping-rooms, and dining-room, and talking-room or parlor, but its thinking-room also, and the architects will put it into their plans. Let it be furnished and ornamented with whatever conduces to serious and creative thought. I should not object to the holy water, or any other simple symbol, if it were consecrated by the imagination of the worshipers.

I heard that some Yankees bet that the candles were not wax, but tin. A European assured them that they were wax; but, inquiring of the sexton, he was surprised to learn that they were tin filled with oil. The church was too poor to afford wax. As for the Protestant churches, here or elsewhere, they did not interest me, for it is only as caves that churches interest me at all, and in that respect they were inferior.

Montreal makes the impression of a larger city than

you had expected to find, though you may have heard that it contains nearly sixty thousand inhabitants. In the newer parts, it appeared to be growing fast like a small New York, and to be considerably Americanized. The names of the squares reminded you of Paris,—the Champ de Mars, the Place d'Armes, and others,—and you felt as if a French revolution might break out any moment. Glimpses of Mount Royal rising behind the town, and the names of some streets in that direction, make one think of Edinburgh. That hill sets off this city wonderfully. I inquired at a principal bookstore for books published in Montreal. They said that there were none but school-books and the like; they got their books from the States. From time to time we met a priest in the streets, for they are distinguished by their dress, like the *civil* police. Like clergymen generally, with or without the gown, they made on us the impression of effeminacy. We also met some Sisters of Charity, dressed in black, with Shaker-shaped black bonnets and crosses, and cadaverous faces, who looked as if they had almost cried their eyes out, their complexions parboiled with scalding tears; insulting the daylight by their presence, having taken an oath not to smile. By cadaverous I mean that their faces were like the faces of those who have been dead and buried for a year, and then untombed, with the life's grief upon them, and yet, for some unaccountable reason, the process of decay arrested.

“Truth never fails her servant, sir, nor leaves him
With the day's shame upon him.”

They waited demurely on the sidewalk while a truck

laden with raisins was driven in at the seminary of St. Sulpice, never once lifting their eyes from the ground.

The soldier here, as everywhere in Canada, appeared to be put forward, and by his best foot. They were in the proportion of the soldiers to the laborers in an African ant-hill. The inhabitants evidently rely on them in a great measure for music and entertainment. You would meet with them pacing back and forth before some guard-house or passage-way, guarding, regarding, and disregarding all kinds of law by turns, apparently for the sake of the discipline to themselves, and not because it was important to exclude anybody from entering that way. They reminded me of the men who are paid for piling up bricks and then throwing them down again. On every prominent ledge you could see England's hands holding the Canadas, and I judged by the redness of her knuckles that she would soon have to let go. In the rear of such a guard-house, in a large graveled square or parade ground, called the Champ de Mars, we saw a large body of soldiers being drilled, we being as yet the only spectators. But they did not appear to notice us any more than the devotees in the church, but were seemingly as indifferent to fewness of spectators as the phenomena of nature are, whatever they might have been thinking under their helmets of the Yankees that were to come. Each man wore white kid gloves. It was one of the most interesting sights which I saw in Canada. The problem appeared to be how to smooth down all individual protuberances or idiosyncrasies, and make a thousand men move as one man, animated by one central will; and there was some

approach to success. They obeyed the signals of a commander who stood at a great distance, wand in hand; and the precision, and promptness, and harmony of their movements could not easily have been matched. The harmony was far more remarkable than that of any choir or band, and obtained, no doubt, at a greater cost. They made on me the impression, not of many individuals, but of one vast centipede of a man, good for all sorts of pulling down; and why not then for some kinds of building up? If men could combine thus earnestly, and patiently, and harmoniously to some really worthy end, what might they not accomplish? They now put their hands, and partially perchance their heads together, and the result is that they are the imperfect tools of an imperfect and tyrannical government. But if they could put their hands and heads and hearts and all together, such a coöperation and harmony would be the very end and success for which government now exists in vain, — a government, as it were, not only with tools, but stock to trade with.

I was obliged to frame some sentences that sounded like French in order to deal with the market-women, who, for the most part, cannot speak English. According to the guidebook the relative population of this city stands nearly thus: two fifths are French-Canadian; nearly one fifth British-Canadian; one and a half fifths English, Irish, and Scotch; somewhat less than one half fifth Germans, United States people, and others. I saw nothing like pie for sale, and no good cake to put in my bundle, such as you can easily find in our towns, but plenty of fair-looking apples, for which Montreal

Island is celebrated, and also pears cheaper and I thought better than ours, and peaches, which, though they were probably brought from the South, were as cheap as they commonly are with us. So imperative is the law of demand and supply that, as I have been told, the market of Montreal is sometimes supplied with green apples from the State of New York some weeks even before they are ripe in the latter place. I saw here the spruce wax which the Canadians chew, done up in little silvered papers, a penny a roll; also a small and shriveled fruit which they called *cerises*, mixed with many little stems, somewhat like raisins, but I soon returned what I had bought, finding them rather insipid, only putting a sample in my pocket. Since my return, I find on comparison that it is the fruit of the sweet viburnum (*Viburnum Lentago*), which with us rarely holds on till it is ripe.

I stood on the deck of the steamer John Munn, late in the afternoon, when the second and third ferry-boats arrived from La Prairie, bringing the remainder of the Yankees. I never saw so many caleches, cabs, charettes, and similar vehicles collected before, and doubt if New York could easily furnish more. The handsome and substantial stone quay which stretches a mile along the riverside and protects the street from the ice was thronged with the citizens who had turned out on foot and in carriages to welcome or to behold the Yankees. It was interesting to see the caleche-drivers dash up and down the slope of the quay with their active little horses. They drive much faster than in our cities. I have been told that some of them come nine miles into the city

every morning and return every night, without changing their horses during the day. In the midst of the crowd of carts, I observed one deep one loaded with sheep with their legs tied together, and their bodies piled one upon another, as if the driver had forgotten that they were sheep and not yet mutton, — a sight, I trust, peculiar to Canada, though I fear that it is not.

CHAPTER II

QUEBEC AND MONTMORENCI

ABOUT six o'clock we started for Quebec, one hundred and eighty miles distant by the river; gliding past Longueuil and Boucherville on the right, and Pointe aux Trembles, "so called from having been originally covered with aspens," and Bout de l'Isle, or the end of the island, on the left. I repeat these names not merely for want of more substantial facts to record, but because they sounded singularly poetic to my ears. There certainly was no lie in them. They suggested that some simple, and, perchance, heroic human life might have transpired there. There is all the poetry in the world in a name. It is a poem which the mass of men hear and read. What is poetry in the common sense, but a string of such jingling names? I want nothing better than a good word. The name of a thing may easily be more than the thing itself to me. Inexpressibly beautiful appears the recognition by man of the least natural fact, and the allying his life to it. All the world reiterating this slender truth, that aspens once grew there; and the swift inference is that men were there to see them. And so it would be with the names of our native and neighboring villages, if we had not profaned them.

The daylight now failed us, and we went below; but I endeavored to console myself for being obliged to make this voyage by night, by thinking that I did not

lose a great deal, the shores being low and rather unattractive, and that the river itself was much the more interesting object. I heard something in the night about the boat being at William Henry, Three Rivers, and in the Richelieu Rapids, but I was still where I had been when I lost sight of Pointe aux Trembles. To hear a man who has been waked up at midnight in the cabin of a steamboat inquiring, "Waiter, where are we now?" is as if, at any moment of the earth's revolution round the sun, or of the system round its centre, one were to raise himself up and inquire of one of the deck hands, "Where are we now?"

I went on deck at daybreak, when we were thirty or forty miles above Quebec. The banks were now higher and more interesting. There was an "uninterrupted succession of whitewashed cottages," on each side of the river. This is what every traveler tells. But it is not to be taken as an evidence of the populousness of the country in general, hardly even of the river-banks. They have presented a similar appearance for a hundred years. The Swedish traveler and naturalist Kalm, who descended the river in 1749, says, "It could really be called a village, beginning at Montreal and ending at Quebec, which is a distance of more than one hundred and eighty miles; for the farmhouses are never above five arpents, and sometimes but three asunder, a few places excepted." Even in 1684 Hontan said that the houses were not more than a gunshot apart at most. Ere long we passed Cape Rouge, eight miles above Quebec, the mouth of the Chaudière on the opposite or south side; New Liverpool Cove with its lumber-rafts

and some shipping; then Sillery and Wolfe's Cove and the Heights of Abraham on the north, with now a view of Cape Diamond, and the citadel in front. The approach to Quebec was very imposing. It was about six o'clock in the morning when we arrived. There is but a single street under the cliff on the south side of the cape, which was made by blasting the rocks and filling up the river. Three-story houses did not rise more than one fifth or one sixth the way up the nearly perpendicular rock, whose summit is three hundred and forty-five feet above the water. We saw, as we glided past, the sign on the side of the precipice, part way up, pointing to the spot where Montgomery was killed in 1775. Formerly it was the custom for those who went to Quebec for the first time to be ducked, or else pay a fine. Not even the Governor-General escaped. But we were too many to be ducked, even if the custom had not been abolished.¹

Here we were, in the harbor of Quebec, still three hundred and sixty miles from the mouth of the St. Lawrence, in a basin two miles across, where the greatest depth is twenty-eight fathoms, and though the water is fresh, the tide rises seventeen to twenty-four feet, — a harbor "large and deep enough," says a British traveler, "to hold the English navy." I may as well

¹ Hierosme Lalemant says in 1648, in his *Relation*, he being Superior: "All those who come to New France know well enough the mountain of Notre Dame, because the pilots and sailors, being arrived at that part of the Great River which is opposite to those high mountains, baptize ordinarily for sport the new passengers, if they do not turn aside by some present the inundation of this baptism which one makes flow plentifully on their heads."

state that, in 1844, the county of Quebec contained about forty-five thousand inhabitants (the city and suburbs having about forty-three thousand), — about twenty-eight thousand being Canadians of French origin; eight thousand British; over seven thousand natives of Ireland; one thousand five hundred natives of England; the rest Scotch and others. Thirty-six thousand belong to the Church of Rome.

Separating ourselves from the crowd, we walked up a narrow street, thence ascended by some wooden steps, called the Break-neck Stairs, into another steep, narrow, and zigzag street, blasted through the rock, which last led through a low, massive stone portal, called Prescott Gate, the principal thoroughfare into the Upper Town. This passage was defended by cannon, with a guard-house over it, a sentinel at his post, and other soldiers at hand ready to relieve him. I rubbed my eyes to be sure that I was in the Nineteenth Century, and was not entering one of those portals which sometimes adorn the frontispieces of new editions of old black-letter volumes. I thought it would be a good place to read Froissart's Chronicles. It was such a reminiscence of the Middle Ages as Scott's novels. Men apparently dwelt there for security! Peace be unto them! As if the inhabitants of New York were to go over to Castle William to live! What a place it must be to bring up children! Being safe through the gate, we naturally took the street which was steepest, and after a few turns found ourselves on the Durham Terrace, a wooden platform on the site of the old castle of St. Louis, still one hundred and fifteen feet below the

summit of the citadel, overlooking the Lower Town, the wharf where we had landed, the harbor, the Isle of Orleans, and the river and surrounding country to a great distance. It was literally a *splendid* view. We could see, six or seven miles distant, in the northeast, an indentation in the lofty shore of the northern channel, apparently on one side of the harbor, which marked the mouth of the Montmorenci, whose celebrated fall was only a few rods in the rear.

At a shoe-shop, whither we were directed for this purpose, we got some of our American money changed into English. I found that American hard money would have answered as well, excepting cents, which fell very fast before their pennies, it taking two of the former to make one of the latter, and often the penny, which had cost us two cents, did us the service of one cent only. Moreover, our robust cents were compelled to meet on even terms a crew of vile half-penny tokens, and Bungtown coppers, which had more brass in their composition, and so perchance made their way in the world. Wishing to get into the citadel, we were directed to the Jesuits' Barracks, — a good part of the public buildings here are barracks, — to get a pass of the Town Major. We did not heed the sentries at the gate, nor did they us, and what under the sun they were placed there for, unless to hinder a free circulation of the air, was not apparent. There we saw soldiers eating their breakfasts in their mess-room, from bare wooden tables in camp fashion. We were continually meeting with soldiers in the streets, carrying funny little tin pails of all shapes, even semicircular, as if made to pack con-

veniently. I supposed that they contained their dinners, — so many slices of bread and butter to each, perchance. Sometimes they were carrying some kind of military chest on a sort of bier or hand-barrow, with a springy, undulating, military step, all passengers giving way to them, even the charette-drivers stopping for them to pass, — as if the battle were being lost from an inadequate supply of powder. There was a regiment of Highlanders, and, as I understood, of Royal Irish, in the city; and by this time there was a regiment of Yankees also. I had already observed, looking up even from the water, the head and shoulders of some General Poniatowsky, with an enormous cocked hat and gun, peering over the roof of a house, away up where the chimney caps commonly are with us, as it were a caricature of war and military awfulness; but I had not gone far up St. Louis Street before my riddle was solved, by the apparition of a real live Highlander under a cocked hat, and with his knees out, standing and marching sentinel on the ramparts, between St. Louis and St. John's Gate. (It must be a holy war that is waged there.) We stood close by without fear and looked at him. His legs were somewhat tanned, and the hair had begun to grow on them, as some of our wise men predict that it will in such cases, but I did not think they were remarkable in any respect. Notwithstanding all his warlike gear, when I inquired of him the way to the Plains of Abraham, he could not answer me without betraying some bashfulness through his broad Scotch. Soon after, we passed another of these creatures standing sentry at the St. Louis Gate, who let us go by without shooting

us, or even demanding the countersign. We then began to go through the gate, which was so thick and tunnel-like as to remind me of those lines in Claudian's "Old Man of Verona," about the getting out of the gate being the greater part of a journey; — as you might imagine yourself crawling through an architectural vignette *at the end* of a black-letter volume. We were then reminded that we had been in a fortress, from which we emerged by numerous zigzags in a ditch-like road, going a considerable distance to advance a few rods, where they could have shot us two or three times over, if their minds had been disposed as their guns were. The greatest, or rather the most prominent, part of this city was constructed with the design to offer the deadliest resistance to leaden and iron missiles that might be cast against it. But it is a remarkable meteorological and psychological fact, that it is rarely known to rain lead with much violence, except on places so constructed. Keeping on about a mile we came to the Plains of Abraham, — for having got through with the Saints, we came next to the Patriarchs. Here the Highland regiment was being reviewed, while the band stood on one side and played — methinks it was *La Claire Fontaine*, the national air of the Canadian French. This is the site where a real battle once took place, to commemorate which they have had a sham fight here almost every day since. The Highlanders manœuvred very well, and if the precision of their movements was less remarkable, they did not appear so stiffly erect as the English or Royal Irish, but had a more elastic and graceful gait, like a herd of their own red deer, or as if accustomed to

stepping down the sides of mountains. But they made a sad impression on the whole, for it was obvious that all true manhood was in the process of being drilled out of them. I have no doubt that soldiers well drilled are, as a class, peculiarly destitute of originality and independence. The officers appeared like men dressed above their condition. It is impossible to give the soldier a good education without making him a deserter. His natural foe is the government that drills him. What would any philanthropist who felt an interest in these men's welfare naturally do, but first of all teach them so to respect themselves that they could not be hired for this work, whatever might be the consequences to this government or that? — not drill a few, but educate all. I observed one older man among them, gray as a wharf-rat, and supple as the devil, marching lock-step with the rest, who would have to pay for that elastic gait.

We returned to the citadel along the heights, plucking such flowers as grew there. There was an abundance of succory still in blossom, broad-leaved goldenrod, buttercups, thorn bushes, Canada thistles, and ivy, on the very summit of Cape Diamond. I also found the bladder campion in the neighborhood. We there enjoyed an extensive view, which I will describe in another place. Our pass, which stated that all the rules were "to be strictly enforced," as if they were determined to keep up the semblance of reality to the last gasp, opened to us the Dalhousie Gate, and we were conducted over the citadel by a bare-legged Highlander in cocked hat and full regimentals. He told us that he had

been here about three years, and had formerly been stationed at Gibraltar. As if his regiment, having perchance been nestled amid the rocks of Edinburgh Castle, must flit from rock to rock thenceforth over the earth's surface, like a bald eagle, or other bird of prey, from eyrie to eyrie. As we were going out, we met the Yankees coming in, in a body headed by a red-coated officer called the commandant, and escorted by many citizens, both English and French-Canadian. I therefore immediately fell into the procession, and went round the citadel again with more intelligent guides, carrying, as before, all my effects with me. Seeing that nobody walked with the red-coated commandant, I attached myself to him, and though I was not what is called well-dressed, he did not know whether to repel me or not, for I talked like one who was not aware of any deficiency in that respect. Probably there was not one among all the Yankees who went to Canada this time, who was not more splendidly dressed than I was. It would have been a poor story if I had not enjoyed some distinction. I had on my "bad-weather clothes," like Olaf Trygvesson the Northman, when he went to the Thing in England, where, by the way, he won his bride. As we stood by the thirty-two-pounder on the summit of Cape Diamond, which is fired three times a day, the commandant told me that it would carry to the Isle of Orleans, four miles distant, and that no hostile vessel could come round the island. I now saw the subterranean or rather "casemated" barracks of the soldiers, which I had not noticed before, though I might have walked over them. They had very narrow windows,

serving as loop-holes for musketry, and small iron chimneys rising above the ground. There we saw the soldiers at home and in an undress, splitting wood, — I looked to see whether with swords or axes, — and in various ways endeavoring to realize that their nation was now at peace with this part of the world. A part of each regiment, chiefly officers, are allowed to marry. A grandfatherly, would-be witty Englishman could give a Yankee whom he was patronizing no reason for the bare knees of the Highlanders, other than oddity. The rock within the citadel is a little convex, so that shells falling on it would roll toward the circumference, where the barracks of the soldiers and officers are; it has been proposed, therefore, to make it slightly concave, so that they may roll into the centre, where they would be comparatively harmless; and it is estimated that to do this would cost twenty thousand pounds sterling. It may be well to remember this when I build my next house, and have the roof “all correct” for bomb-shells.

At mid-afternoon we made haste down Sault-au-Matelot Street, towards the Falls of Montmorenci, about eight miles down the St. Lawrence, on the north side, leaving the further examination of Quebec till our return. On our way, we saw men in the streets sawing logs pit-fashion, and afterward, with a common wood-saw and horse, cutting the planks into squares for paving the streets. This looked very shiftless, especially in a country abounding in water-power, and reminded me that I was no longer in Yankeeland. I found, on inquiry, that the excuse for this was that labor was so

cheap; and I thought, with some pain, how cheap men are here! I have since learned that the English traveler Warburton remarked, soon after landing at Quebec, that everything was cheap there but men. That must be the difference between going thither from New and from Old England. I had already observed the dogs harnessed to their little milk-carts, which contain a single large can, lying asleep in the gutters regardless of the horses, while they rested from their labors, at different stages of the ascent in the Upper Town. I was surprised at the regular and extensive use made of these animals for drawing not only milk but groceries, wood, etc. It reminded me that the dog commonly is not put to any use. Cats catch mice; but dogs only worry the cats. Kalm, a hundred years ago, saw sledges here for ladies to ride in, drawn by a pair of dogs. He says, "A middle-sized dog is sufficient to draw a single person, when the roads are good;" and he was told by old people that horses were very scarce in their youth, and almost all the land-carriage was then effected by dogs. They made me think of the Esquimaux, who, in fact, are the next people on the north. Charlevoix says that the first horses were introduced in 1665.

We crossed Dorchester Bridge, over the St. Charles, the little river in which Cartier, the discoverer of the St. Lawrence, put his ships, and spent the winter of 1535, and found ourselves on an excellent macadamized road, called *Le Chemin de Beauport*. We had left Concord Wednesday morning, and we endeavored to realize that now, Friday morning, we were taking a walk in Canada, in the Seigniory of Beauport, a foreign country.

which a few days before had seemed almost as far off as England and France. Instead of rambling to Flint's Pond or the Sudbury meadows, we found ourselves, after being a little detained in cars and steamboats, — after spending half a night at Burlington, and half a day at Montreal, — taking a walk down the bank of the St. Lawrence to the Falls of Montmorenci and elsewhere. Well, I thought to myself, here I am in a foreign country; let me have my eyes about me, and take it all in. It already looked and felt a good deal colder than it had in New England, as we might have expected it would. I realized fully that I was four degrees nearer the pole, and shuddered at the thought; and I wondered if it were possible that the peaches might not be all gone when I returned. It was an atmosphere that made me think of the fur-trade, which is so interesting a department in Canada, for I had for all head-covering a thin palm-leaf hat without lining, that cost twenty-five cents, and over my coat one of those unspeakably cheap, as well as thin, brown linen sacks of the Oak Hall pattern, which every summer appear all over New England, thick as the leaves upon the trees. It was a thoroughly Yankee costume, which some of my fellow-travelers wore in the cars to save their coats a dusting. I wore mine, at first, because it looked better than the coat it covered, and last, because two coats were warmer than one, though one was thin and dirty. I never wear my best coat on a journey, though perchance I could show a certificate to prove that I have a more costly one, at least, at home, if that were all that a gentleman required. It is not wise for a traveler to go dressed. I should no

more think of it than of putting on a clean dicky and blacking my shoes to go a-fishing; as if you were going out to dine, when, in fact, the genuine traveler is going out to work hard, and fare harder, — to eat a crust by the wayside whenever he can get it. Honest traveling is about as dirty work as you can do, and a man needs a pair of overalls for it. As for blacking my shoes in such a case, I should as soon think of blacking my face. I carry a piece of tallow to preserve the leather and keep out the water; that's all; and many an officious shoe-black, who carried off my shoes when I was slumbering, mistaking me for a gentleman, has had occasion to repent it before he produced a gloss on them.

My pack, in fact, was soon made, for I keep a short list of those articles which, from frequent experience, I have found indispensable to the foot-traveler; and, when I am about to start, I have only to consult that, to be sure that nothing is omitted, and, what is more important, nothing superfluous inserted. Most of my fellow-travelers carried carpet-bags, or valises. Sometimes one had two or three ponderous yellow valises in his clutch, at each hitch of the cars, as if we were going to have another rush for seats; and when there was a rush in earnest, — and there were not a few, — I would see my man in the crowd, with two or three affectionate lusty fellows along each side of his arm, between his shoulder and his valises, which last held them tight to his back, like the nut on the end of a screw. I could not help asking in my mind, What so great cause for showing Canada to those valises, when perhaps your very nieces had to stay at home for want of an escort? I should have

liked to be present when the custom-house officer came aboard of him, and asked him to declare upon his honor if he had anything but wearing apparel in them. Even the elephant carries but a small trunk on his journeys. The perfection of traveling is to travel without baggage. After considerable reflection and experience, I have concluded that the best bag for the foot-traveler is made with a handkerchief, or, if he study appearances, a piece of stiff brown paper, well tied up, with a fresh piece within to put outside when the first is torn. That is good for both town and country, and none will know but you are carrying home the silk for a new gown for your wife, when it may be a dirty shirt. A bundle which you can carry literally under your arm, and which will shrink and swell with its contents. I never found the carpet-bag of equal capacity which was not a bundle of itself. We styled ourselves the Knights of the Umbrella and the Bundle; for, wherever we went, whether to Notre Dame or Mount Royal or the Champ de Mars, to the Town Major's or the Bishop's Palace, to the Citadel, with a bare-legged Highlander for our escort, or to the Plains of Abraham, to dinner or to bed, the umbrella and the bundle went with us; for we wished to be ready to digress at any moment. We made it our home nowhere in particular, but everywhere where our umbrella and bundle were. It would have been an amusing circumstance, if the mayor of one of those cities had politely asked us where we were staying. We could only have answered that we were staying with his honor for the time being. I was amused when, after our return, some green ones inquired if we found it easy to get

accommodated ; as if we went abroad to get accommodated, when we can get that at home.

We met with many charettes, bringing wood and stone to the city. The most ordinary-looking horses traveled faster than ours, or perhaps they were ordinary-looking because, as I am told, the Canadians do not use the curry-comb. Moreover, it is said that on the approach of winter their horses acquire an increased quantity of hair, to protect them from the cold. If this be true, some of our horses would make you think winter were approaching, even in midsummer. We soon began to see women and girls at work in the fields, digging potatoes alone, or bundling up the grain which the men cut. They appeared in rude health, with a great deal of color in their cheeks, and, if their occupation had made them coarse, it impressed me as better in its effects than making shirts at fourpence apiece, or doing nothing at all — unless it be chewing slate-pencils — with still smaller results. They were much more agreeable objects, with their great broad-brimmed hats and flowing dresses, than the men and boys. We afterwards saw them doing various other kinds of work ; indeed, I thought that we saw more women at work out of doors than men. On our return, we observed in this town a girl, with Indian boots nearly two feet high, taking the harness off a dog.

The purity and transparency of the atmosphere were wonderful. When we had been walking an hour, we were surprised, on turning round, to see how near the city, with its glittering tin roofs, still looked. A village ten miles off did not appear to be more than three or four. I was convinced that you could see objects dis-

tinctly there much farther than here. It is true the villages are of a dazzling white, but the dazzle is to be referred, perhaps, to the transparency of the atmosphere as much as to the whitewash.

We were now fairly in the village of Beauport, though there was still but one road. The houses stood close upon this, without any front yards, and at an angle with it, as if they had dropped down, being set with more reference to the road which the sun travels. It being about sundown, and the falls not far off, we began to look round for a lodging, for we preferred to put up at a private house, that we might see more of the inhabitants. We inquired first at the most promising-looking houses, — if, indeed, any were promising. When we knocked, they shouted some French word for come in, perhaps *Entrez*, and we asked for a lodging in English; but we found, unexpectedly, that they spoke French only. Then we went along and tried another house, being generally saluted by a rush of two or three little curs, which readily distinguished a foreigner, and which we were prepared now to hear bark in French. Our first question would be “Parlez-vous Anglais?” but the invariable answer was “Non, monsieur;” and we soon found that the inhabitants were exclusively French Canadians, and nobody spoke English at all, any more than in France; that, in fact, we were in a foreign country, where the inhabitants uttered not one familiar sound to us. Then we tried by turns to talk French with them, in which we succeeded sometimes pretty well, but for the most part pretty ill. “Pouvez-vous nous donner un lit cette nuit?” we would

ask, and then they would answer with French volubility, so that we could catch only a word here and there. We could understand the women and children generally better than the men, and they us; and thus, after a while, we would learn that they had no more beds than they used.

So we were compelled to inquire, “Y a-t-il une maison publique ici?” (*auberge* we should have said, perhaps, for they seemed never to have heard of the other), and they answered at length that there was no tavern, unless we could get lodgings at the mill, *le moulin*, which we had passed; or they would direct us to a grocery, and almost every house had a small grocery at one end of it. We called on the public notary or village lawyer, but he had no more beds nor English than the rest. At one house there was so good a misunderstanding at once established through the politeness of all parties, that we were encouraged to walk in and sit down, and ask for a glass of water; and having drank their water, we thought it was as good as to have tasted their salt. When our host and his wife spoke of their poor accommodations, meaning for themselves, we assured them that they were good enough, for we thought that they were only apologizing for the pooriness of the accommodations they were about to offer us, and we did not discover our mistake till they took us up a ladder into a loft, and showed to our eyes what they had been laboring in vain to communicate to our brains through our ears, that they had but that one apartment with its few beds for the whole family. We made our *adieux* forthwith, and with gravity, perceiving the literal significa-

tion of that word. We were finally taken in at a sort of public house, whose master worked for Patterson, the proprietor of the extensive sawmills driven by a portion of the Montmorenci stolen from the fall, whose roar we now heard. We here talked, or murdered, French all the evening, with the master of the house and his family, and probably had a more amusing time than if we had completely understood one another. At length they showed us to a bed in their best chamber, very high to get into, with a low wooden rail to it. It had no cotton sheets, but coarse, home-made, dark-colored linen ones. Afterward, we had to do with sheets still coarser than these, and nearly the color of our blankets. There was a large open buffet loaded with crockery in one corner of the room, as if to display their wealth to travelers, and pictures of Scripture scenes, French, Italian, and Spanish, hung around. Our hostess came back directly to inquire if we would have brandy for breakfast. The next morning, when I asked their names, she took down the temperance pledges of herself and husband and children, which were hanging against the wall. They were Jean Baptiste Binet and his wife, Geneviève Binet. Jean Baptiste is the sobriquet of the French Canadians.

After breakfast we proceeded to the fall, which was within half a mile, and at this distance its rustling sound, like the wind among the leaves, filled all the air. We were disappointed to find that we were in some measure shut out from the west side of the fall by the private grounds and fences of Patterson, who appropriates not only a part of the water for his mill,

but a still larger part of the prospect, so that we were obliged to trespass. This gentleman's mansion-house and grounds were formerly occupied by the Duke of Kent, father to Queen Victoria. It appeared to me in bad taste for an individual, though he were the father of Queen Victoria, to obtrude himself with his land titles, or at least his fences, on so remarkable a natural phenomenon, which should, in every sense, belong to mankind. Some falls should even be kept sacred from the intrusion of mills and factories, as water privileges in another than the millwright's sense. This small river falls perpendicularly nearly two hundred and fifty feet at one pitch. The St. Lawrence falls only one hundred and sixty-four feet at Niagara. It is a very simple and noble fall, and leaves nothing to be desired ; but the most that I could say of it would only have the force of one other testimony to assure the reader that it is there. We looked directly down on it from the point of a projecting rock, and saw far below us, on a low promontory, the grass kept fresh and green by the perpetual drizzle, looking like moss. The rock is a kind of slate, in the crevices of which grew ferns and goldenrods. The prevailing trees on the shores were spruce and arbor-vitæ, — the latter very large and now full of fruit, — also aspens, alders, and the mountain-ash with its berries. Every emigrant who arrives in this country by way of the St. Lawrence, as he opens a point of the Isle of Orleans, sees the Montmorenci tumbling into the Great River thus magnificently in a vast white sheet, making its contribution with emphasis. Roberval's pilot, Jean Alphonse, saw this fall

thus, and described it, in 1542. It is a splendid introduction to the scenery of Quebec. Instead of an artificial fountain in its square, Quebec has this magnificent natural waterfall, to adorn one side of its harbor. Within the mouth of the chasm below, which can be entered only at ebb-tide, we had a grand view at once of Quebec and of the fall. Kalm says that the noise of the fall is sometimes heard at Quebec, about eight miles distant, and is a sign of a northeast wind. The side of this chasm, of soft and crumbling slate too steep to climb, was among the memorable features of the scene. In the winter of 1829 the frozen spray of the fall, descending on the ice of the St. Lawrence, made a hill one hundred and twenty-six feet high. It is an annual phenomenon which some think may help explain the formation of glaciers.

In the vicinity of the fall we began to notice what looked like our red-fruited thorn bushes, grown to the size of ordinary apple trees, very common, and full of large red or yellow fruit, which the inhabitants called *pommettes*, but I did not learn that they were put to any use.

CHAPTER III

ST. ANNE

By the middle of the forenoon, though it was a rainy day, we were once more on our way down the north bank of the St. Lawrence, in a northeasterly direction, toward the Falls of St. Anne, which are about thirty miles from Quebec. The settled, more level, and fertile portion of Canada East may be described rudely as a triangle, with its apex slanting toward the northeast, about one hundred miles wide at its base, and from two to three or even four hundred miles long, if you reckon its narrow northeastern extremity; it being the immediate valley of the St. Lawrence and its tributaries, rising by a single or by successive terraces toward the mountains on either hand. Though the words Canada East on the map stretch over many rivers and lakes and unexplored wildernesses, the actual Canada, which might be the colored portion of the map, is but a little clearing on the banks of the river, which one of those syllables would more than cover. The banks of the St. Lawrence are rather low from Montreal to the Richelieu Rapids, about forty miles above Quebec. Thence they rise gradually to Cape Diamond, or Quebec. Where we now were, eight miles northeast of Quebec, the mountains which form the northern side of this triangle were only five or six miles distant from the river, gradually departing farther and farther from it, on the west, till

they reach the Ottawa, and making haste to meet it on the east, at Cape Tourmente, now in plain sight about twenty miles distant. So that we were traveling in a very narrow and sharp triangle between the mountains and the river, tilted up toward the mountains on the north, never losing sight of our great fellow-traveler on our right. According to Bouchette's Topographical Description of the Canadas, we were in the Seigniory of the Côte de Beaupré, in the county of Montmorenci, and the district of Quebec, — in that part of Canada which was the first to be settled, and where the face of the country and the population have undergone the least change from the beginning, where the influence of the States and of Europe is least felt, and the inhabitants see little or nothing of the world over the walls of Quebec. This Seigniory was granted in 1636, and is now the property of the Seminary of Quebec. It is the most mountainous one in the province. There are some half a dozen parishes in it, each containing a church, parsonage-house, gristmill, and several sawmills. We were now in the most westerly parish, called Ange Gardien, or the Guardian Angel, which is bounded on the west by the Montmorenci. The north bank of the St. Lawrence here is formed on a grand scale. It slopes gently, either directly from the shore or from the edge of an interval, till, at the distance of about a mile, it attains the height of four or five hundred feet. The single road runs along the side of the slope two or three hundred feet above the river at first, and from a quarter of a mile to a mile distant from it, and affords fine views of the north channel, which is about a mile wide, and of the beautiful Isle

of Orleans, about twenty miles long by five wide, where grow the best apples and plums in the Quebec district.

Though there was but this single road, it was a continuous village for as far as we walked this day and the next, or about thirty miles down the river, the houses being as near together all the way as in the middle of one of our smallest straggling country villages, and we could never tell by their number when we were on the skirts of a parish, for the road never ran through the fields or woods. We were told that it was just six miles from one parish church to another. I thought that we saw every house in Ange Gardien. Therefore, as it was a muddy day, we never got out of the mud, nor out of the village, unless we got over the fence; then, indeed, if it was on the north side, we were out of the civilized world. There were sometimes a few more houses near the church, it is true, but we had only to go a quarter of a mile from the road, to the top of the bank, to find ourselves on the verge of the uninhabited, and, for the most part, unexplored wilderness stretching toward Hudson's Bay. The farms accordingly were extremely long and narrow, each having a frontage on the river. Bouchette accounts for this peculiar manner of laying out a village by referring to "the social character of the Canadian peasant, who is singularly fond of neighborhood," also to the advantage arising from a concentration of strength in Indian times. Each farm, called *terre*, he says, is, in nine cases out of ten, three arpents wide by thirty deep, that is, very nearly thirty-five by three hundred and forty-nine of our rods; sometimes one half arpent by thirty, or one to sixty; sometimes, in fact, a few yards by half a mile.

Of course it costs more for fences. A remarkable difference between the Canadian and the New England character appears from the fact that, in 1745, the French government were obliged to pass a law forbidding the farmers or *censitaires* building on land less than one and a half arpents front by thirty or forty deep, under a certain penalty, in order to compel emigration, and bring the seigneur's estates all under cultivation; and it is thought that they have now less reluctance to leave the paternal roof than formerly, "removing beyond the sight of the parish spire, or the sound of the parish bell." But I find that in the previous or seventeenth century, the complaint, often renewed, was of a totally opposite character, namely, that the inhabitants dispersed and exposed themselves to the Iroquois. Accordingly, about 1664, the king was obliged to order that "they should make no more clearings except one next to another, and that they should reduce their parishes to the form of the parishes in France as much as possible." The Canadians of those days, at least, possessed a roving spirit of adventure which carried them further, in exposure to hardship and danger, than ever the New England colonist went, and led them, though not to clear and colonize the wilderness, yet to range over it as *coureurs de bois*, or runners of the woods, or, as Hontan prefers to call them, *coureurs de risques*, runners of risks; to say nothing of their enterprising priesthood; and Charlevoix thinks that if the authorities had taken the right steps to prevent the youth from ranging the woods (*de courir les bois*), they would have had an excellent militia to fight the Indians and English.

The road in this clayey-looking soil was exceedingly muddy in consequence of the night's rain. We met an old woman directing her dog, which was harnessed to a little cart, to the least muddy part of it. It was a beggarly sight. But harnessed to the cart as he was, we heard him barking after we had passed, though we looked anywhere but to the cart to see where the dog was that barked. The houses commonly fronted the south, whatever angle they might make with the road; and frequently they had no door nor cheerful window on the road side. Half the time they stood fifteen to forty rods from the road, and there was no very obvious passage to them, so that you would suppose that there must be another road running by them. They were of stone, rather coarsely mortared, but neatly whitewashed, almost invariably one story high and long in proportion to their height, with a shingled roof, the shingles being pointed, for ornament, at the eaves, like the pickets of a fence, and also one row halfway up the roof. The gables sometimes projected a foot or two at the ridge-pole only. Yet they were very humble and unpretending dwellings. They commonly had the date of their erection on them. The windows opened in the middle, like blinds, and were frequently provided with solid shutters. Sometimes, when we walked along the back side of a house which stood near the road, we observed stout stakes leaning against it, by which the shutters, now pushed half open, were fastened at night; within, the houses were neatly ceiled with wood not painted. The oven was commonly out of doors, built of stone and mortar, frequently on a raised platform of planks. The cellar was often on the

opposite side of the road, in front of or behind the houses, looking like an ice-house with us, with a lattice door for summer. The very few mechanics whom we met had an old-Bettyish look, in their aprons and *bonnets rouges* like fools' caps. The men wore commonly the same *bonnet rouge*, or red woolen or worsted cap, or sometimes blue or gray, looking to us as if they had got up with their night-caps on, and, in fact, I afterwards found that they had. Their clothes were of the cloth of the country, *étouffe du pays*, gray or some other plain color. The women looked stout, with gowns that stood out stiffly, also, for the most part, apparently of some home-made stuff. We also saw some specimens of the more characteristic winter dress of the Canadian, and I have since frequently detected him in New England by his coarse gray homespun capote and picturesque red sash, and his well-furred cap, made to protect his ears against the severity of his climate.

It drizzled all day, so that the roads did not improve. We began now to meet with wooden crosses frequently, by the roadside, about a dozen feet high, often old and toppling down, sometimes standing in a square wooden platform, sometimes in a pile of stones, with a little niche containing a picture of the Virgin and Child, or of Christ alone, sometimes with a string of beads, and covered with a piece of glass to keep out the rain, with the words, *Pour la Vierge*, or INRI, on them. Frequently, on the cross-bar, there would be quite a collection of symbolical knickknacks, looking like an Italian's board; the representation in wood of a hand, a hammer, spikes, pincers, a flask of vinegar, a ladder, etc., the whole, perchance,

surmounted by a weathercock; but I could not look at an honest weathercock in this walk without mistrusting that there was some covert reference in it to St. Peter. From time to time we passed a little one-story chapel-like building, with a tin-roofed spire, a shrine, perhaps it would be called, close to the path-side, with a lattice door, through which we could see an altar, and pictures about the walls; equally open, through rain and shine, though there was no getting into it. At these places the inhabitants kneeled and perhaps breathed a short prayer. We saw one schoolhouse in our walk, and listened to the sounds which issued from it; but it appeared like a place where the process, not of enlightening, but of obfuscating the mind was going on, and the pupils received only so much light as could penetrate the shadow of the Catholic Church. The churches were very picturesque, and their interior much more showy than the dwelling-houses promised. They were of stone, for it was ordered, in 1699, that that should be their material. They had tinned spires, and quaint ornaments. That of Ange Gardien had a dial on it, with the Middle Age Roman numerals on its face, and some images in niches on the outside. Probably its counterpart has existed in Normandy for a thousand years. At the church of Château Richer, which is the next parish to Ange Gardien, we read, looking over the wall, the inscriptions in the adjacent churchyard, which began with *Ici gît or Repose*, and one over a boy contained *Priez pour lui*. This answered as well as Père la Chaise. We knocked at the door of the curé's house here, when a sleek, friar-like personage, in his sacerdotal

robe, appeared. To our "Parlez-vous Anglais?" even he answered, "Non, monsieur;" but at last we made him understand what we wanted. It was to find the ruins of the old *château*. "Ah! oui! oui!" he exclaimed, and, donning his coat, hastened forth, and conducted us to a small heap of rubbish which we had already examined. He said that fifteen years before, it was *plus considérable*. Seeing at that moment three little red birds fly out of a crevice in the ruins, up into an arbor-vitæ tree which grew out of them, I asked him their names, in such French as I could muster, but he neither understood me nor ornithology; he only inquired where we had *appris à parler Français*; we told him, *dans les États-Unis*; and so we bowed him into his house again. I was surprised to find a man wearing a black coat, and with apparently no work to do, even in that part of the world.

The universal salutation from the inhabitants whom we met was *bon jour*, at the same time touching the hat; with *bon jour*, and touching your hat, you may go smoothly through all Canada East. A little boy, meeting us, would remark, "Bon jour, monsieur; le chemin est mauvais" (Good morning, sir; it is bad walking). Sir Francis Head says that the immigrant is forward to "appreciate the happiness of living in a land in which the old country's servile custom of touching the hat does not exist," but he was thinking of Canada West, of course. It would, indeed, be a serious bore to be obliged to touch your hat several times a day. A Yankee has not leisure for it.

We saw peas, and even beans, collected into heaps in the fields. The former are an important crop here,

and, I suppose, are not so much infested by the weevil as with us. There were plenty of apples, very fair and sound, by the roadside, but they were so small as to suggest the origin of the apple in the crab. There was also a small, red fruit which they called *snells*, and another, also red and very acid, whose name a little boy wrote for me, "*pinbena*." It is probably the same with, or similar to, the *pembina* of the voyageurs, a species of viburnum, which, according to Richardson, has given its name to many of the rivers of Rupert's Land. The forest trees were spruce, arbor-vitæ, firs, birches, beeches, two or three kinds of maple, basswood, wild cherry, aspens, etc., but no pitch pines (*Pinus rigida*). I saw very few, if any, trees which had been set out for shade or ornament. The water was commonly running streams or springs in the bank by the roadside, and was excellent. The parishes are commonly separated by a stream, and frequently the farms. I noticed that the fields were furrowed or thrown into beds seven or eight feet wide to dry the soil.

At the Rivière du Sault à la Puce, which, I suppose, means the River of the Fall of the Flea, was advertised in English, as the sportsmen are English, "The best Snipe-shooting grounds," over the door of a small public house. These words being English affected me as if I had been absent now ten years from my country, and for so long had not heard the sound of my native language, and every one of them was as interesting to me as if I had been a snipe-shooter, and they had been snipes. The prunella, or self-heal, in the grass here, was an old acquaintance. We frequently saw the inhab-

itants washing or cooking for their pigs, and in one place hackling flax by the roadside. It was pleasant to see these usually domestic operations carried on out of doors, even in that cold country.

At twilight we reached a bridge over a little river, the boundary between Château Richer and St. Anne, *le premier pont de Ste. Anne*, and at dark the church of *La Bonne Ste. Anne*. Formerly vessels from France, when they came in sight of this church, gave "a general discharge of their artillery," as a sign of joy that they had escaped all the dangers of the river. Though all the while we had grand views of the adjacent country far up and down the river, and, for the most part, when we turned about, of Quebec in the horizon behind us, and we never beheld it without new surprise and admiration; yet, throughout our walk, the Great River of Canada on our right hand was the main feature in the landscape, and this expands so rapidly below the Isle of Orleans, and creates such a breadth of level horizon above its waters in that direction, that, looking down the river as we approached the extremity of that island, the St. Lawrence seemed to be opening into the ocean, though we were still about three hundred and twenty-five miles from what can be called its mouth.¹

When we inquired here for a *maison publique* we were directed apparently to that private house where

¹ From McCulloch's Geographical Dictionary we learn that "immediately beyond the Island of Orleans it is a mile broad; where the Saguenay joins it, eighteen miles; at Point Peter, upward of thirty; at the Bay of Seven Islands, seventy miles; and at the Island of Anticosti (above three hundred and fifty miles from Quebec), it rolls a flood into the ocean nearly one hundred miles across."

we were most likely to find entertainment. There were no guide-boards where we walked, because there was but one road; there were no shops nor signs, because there were no artisans to speak of, and the people raised their own provisions; and there were no taverns, because there were no travelers. We here bespoke lodging and breakfast. They had, as usual, a large, old-fashioned, two-storied box stove in the middle of the room, out of which, in due time, there was sure to be forthcoming a supper, breakfast, or dinner. The lower half held the fire, the upper the hot air, and as it was a cool Canadian evening, this was a comforting sight to us. Being four or five feet high it warmed the whole person as you stood by it. The stove was plainly a very important article of furniture in Canada, and was not set aside during the summer. Its size, and the respect which was paid to it, told of the severe winters which it had seen and prevailed over. The master of the house, in his long-pointed red woolen cap, had a thoroughly antique physiognomy of the old Norman stamp. He might have come over with Jacques Cartier. His was the hardest French to understand of any we had heard yet, for there was a great difference between one speaker and another, and this man talked with a pipe in his mouth beside, — a kind of tobacco French. I asked him what he called his dog. He shouted *Brock!* (the name of the breed). We like to hear the cat called *min*, “Min! min! min!” I inquired if we could cross the river here to the Isle of Orleans, thinking to return that way when we had been to the falls. He answered, “S’il ne fait pas un trop grand vent” (If there is not too much wind). They

use small boats, or pirogues, and the waves are often too high for them. He wore, as usual, something between a moccasin and a boot, which he called *bottes Indiennes*, Indian boots, and had made himself. The tops were of calf or sheepskin, and the soles of cowhide turned up like a moccasin. They were yellow or reddish, the leather never having been tanned nor colored. The women wore the same. He told us that he had traveled ten leagues due north into the bush. He had been to the Falls of St. Anne, and said that they were more beautiful, but not greater, than Montmorenci, *plus beau, mais non plus grand, que Montmorenci*. As soon as we had retired, the family commenced their devotions. A little boy officiated, and for a long time we heard him muttering over his prayers.

In the morning, after a breakfast of tea, maple-sugar, bread and butter, and what I suppose is called *potage* (potatoes and meat boiled with flour), the universal dish as we found, perhaps the national one, I ran over to the Church of La Bonne Ste. Anne, whose matin bell we had heard, it being Sunday morning. Our book said that this church had "long been an object of interest, from the miraculous cures said to have been wrought on visitors to the shrine." There was a profusion of gilding, and I counted more than twenty-five crutches suspended on the walls, some for grown persons, some for children, which it was to be inferred so many sick had been able to dispense with; but they looked as if they had been made to order by the carpenter who made the church. There were one or two villagers at their devotions at that early hour, who did not look up, but when they had

sat a long time with their little book before the picture of one saint, went to another. Our whole walk was through a thoroughly Catholic country, and there was no trace of any other religion. I doubt if there are any more simple and unsophisticated Catholics anywhere. Emery de Caen, Champlain's contemporary, told the Huguenot sailors that "Monseigneur the Duke de Ventadour (Viceroy) did not wish that they should sing psalms in the Great River."

On our way to the falls, we met the habitants coming to the Church of La Bonne Ste. Anne, walking or riding in charettes by families. I remarked that they were universally of small stature. The toll-man at the bridge over the St. Anne was the first man we had chanced to meet, since we left Quebec, who could speak a word of English. How good French the inhabitants of this part of Canada speak, I am not competent to say; I only know that it is not made impure by being mixed with English. I do not know why it should not be as good as is spoken in Normandy. Charlevoix, who was here a hundred years ago, observes, "The French language is nowhere spoken with greater purity, there being no accent perceptible;" and Potherie said "they had no dialect, which, indeed, is generally lost in a colony."

The falls, which we were in search of, are three miles up the St. Anne. We followed for a short distance a foot-path up the east bank of this river, through handsome sugar maple and arbor-vitæ groves. Having lost the path which led to a house where we were to get further directions, we dashed at once into the woods, steering by guess and by compass, climbing directly

through woods a steep hill, or mountain, five or six hundred feet high, which was, in fact, only the bank of the St. Lawrence. Beyond this we by good luck fell into another path, and following this or a branch of it, at our discretion, through a forest consisting of large white pines, — the first we had seen in our walk, — we at length heard the roar of falling water, and came out at the head of the Falls of St. Anne. We had descended into a ravine or cleft in the mountain, whose walls rose still a hundred feet above us, though we were near its top, and we now stood on a very rocky shore, where the water had lately flowed a dozen feet higher, as appeared by the stones and driftwood, and large birches twisted and splintered as a farmer twists a withe. Here the river, one or two hundred feet wide, came flowing rapidly over a rocky bed out of that interesting wilderness which stretches toward Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits. Ha-ha Bay, on the Saguenay, was about one hundred miles north of where we stood. Looking on the map, I find that the first country on the north which bears a name is that part of Rupert's Land called East Main. This river, called after the holy Anne, flowing from such a direction, here tumbled over a precipice, at present by three channels, how far down I do not know, but far enough for all our purposes, and to as good a distance as if twice as far. It matters little whether you call it one, or two, or three hundred feet; at any rate, it was a sufficient water privilege for us. I crossed the principal channel directly over the verge of the fall, where it was contracted to about fifteen feet in width, by a dead tree which had been dropped across

and secured in a cleft of the opposite rock, and a smaller one a few feet higher, which served for a hand-rail. This bridge was rotten as well as small and slippery, being stripped of bark, and I was obliged to seize a moment to pass when the falling water did not surge over it, and midway, though at the expense of wet feet, I looked down probably more than a hundred feet, into the mist and foam below. This gave me the freedom of an island of precipitous rock by which I descended as by giant steps, — the rock being composed of large cubical masses, clothed with delicate close-hugging lichens of various colors, kept fresh and bright by the moisture, — till I viewed the first fall from the front, and looked down still deeper to where the second and third channels fell into a remarkably large circular basin worn in the stone. The falling water seemed to jar the very rocks, and the noise to be ever increasing. The vista down-stream was through a narrow and deep cleft in the mountain, all white suds at the bottom; but a sudden angle in this gorge prevented my seeing through to the bottom of the fall. Returning to the shore, I made my way down-stream through the forest to see how far the fall extended, and how the river came out of that adventure. It was to clamber along the side of a precipitous mountain of loose mossy rocks, covered with a damp primitive forest, and terminating at the bottom in an abrupt precipice over the stream. This was the east side of the fall. At length, after a quarter of a mile, I got down to still water, and, on looking up through the winding gorge, I could just see to the foot of the fall which I had before examined; while from the opposite

side of the stream, here much contracted, rose a perpendicular wall, I will not venture to say how many hundred feet, but only that it was the highest perpendicular wall of bare rock that I ever saw. In front of me tumbled in from the summit of the cliff a tributary stream, making a beautiful cascade, which was a remarkable fall in itself, and there was a cleft in this precipice, apparently four or five feet wide, perfectly straight up and down from top to bottom, which, from its cavernous depth and darkness, appeared merely as a *black streak*. This precipice is not sloped, nor is the material soft and crumbling slate as at Montmorenci, but it rises perpendicular, like the side of a mountain fortress, and is cracked into vast cubical masses of gray and black rock shining with moisture, as if it were the ruin of an ancient wall built by Titans. Birches, spruces, mountain-ashes with their bright red berries, arbor-vitæ, white pines, alders, etc., overhung this chasm on the very verge of the cliff and in the crevices, and here and there were buttresses of rock supporting trees part way down, yet so as to enhance, not injure, the effect of the bare rock. Take it altogether, it was a most wild and rugged and stupendous chasm, so deep and narrow, where a river had worn itself a passage through a mountain of rock, and all around was the comparatively untrodden wilderness.

This was the limit of our walk down the St. Lawrence. Early in the afternoon we began to retrace our steps, not being able to cross the north channel and return by the Isle of Orleans, on account of the *trop grand vent*, or too great wind. Though the waves did run pretty

high, it was evident that the inhabitants of Montmorenci County were no sailors, and made but little use of the river. When we reached the bridge between St. Anne and Château Richer, I ran back a little way to ask a man in the field the name of the river which we were crossing, but for a long time I could not make out what he said, for he was one of the more unintelligible Jacques Cartier men. At last it flashed upon me that it was *La Rivière au Chien*, or the Dog River, which my eyes beheld, which brought to my mind the life of the Canadian voyageur and *coureur de bois*, a more western and wilder Arcadia, methinks, than the world has ever seen; for the Greeks, with all their wood and river gods, were not so qualified to name the natural features of a country as the ancestors of these French Canadians; and if any people had a right to substitute their own for the Indian names, it was they. They have preceded the pioneer on our own frontiers, and named the *prairie* for us. *La Rivière au Chien* cannot, by any license of language, be translated into Dog River, for that is not such a giving it to the dogs, and recognizing their place in creation, as the French implies. One of the tributaries of the St. Anne is named *La Rivière de la Rose*; and farther east are *La Rivière de la Blondelle* and *La Rivière de la Friponne*. Their very *rivière* meanders more than our *river*.

Yet the impression which this country made on me was commonly different from this. To a traveler from the Old World, Canada East may appear like a new country, and its inhabitants like colonists, but to me, coming from New England and being a very green

traveler withal, — notwithstanding what I have said about Hudson's Bay, — it appeared as old as Normandy itself, and realized much that I had heard of Europe and the Middle Ages. Even the names of humble Canadian villages affected me as if they had been those of the renowned cities of antiquity. To be told by a habitan, when I asked the name of a village in sight, that it is *St. Feréol* or *St. Anne*, the *Guardian Angel* or the *Holy Joseph's*; or of a mountain, that it was *Bélange* or *St. Hyacinthe* ! As soon as you leave the States, these saintly names begin. *St. Johns* is the first town you stop at (fortunately we did not see it), and thenceforward, the names of the mountains, and streams, and villages reel, if I may so speak, with the intoxication of poetry, — *Chambly*, *Longueuil*, *Pointe aux Trembles*, *Bartholomy*, etc., etc. ; as if it needed only a little foreign accent, a few more liquids and vowels perchance in the language, to make us locate our ideals at once. I began to dream of Provence and the Troubadours, and of places and things which have no existence on the earth. They veiled the Indian and the primitive forest, and the woods toward Hudson's Bay were only as the forests of France and Germany. I could not at once bring myself to believe that the inhabitants who pronounced daily those beautiful and, to me, significant names lead as prosaic lives as we of New England. In short, the Canada which I saw was not merely a place for railroads to terminate in and for criminals to run to.

When I asked the man to whom I have referred, if there were any falls on the *Rivière au Chien*, — for I saw that it came over the same high bank with the

Montmorenci and St. Anne, — he answered that there were. How far? I inquired. “Trois quatres lieue.” How high? “Je pense-quatre-vingt-dix pieds;” that is, ninety feet. We turned aside to look at the falls of the Rivière du Sault à la Puce, half a mile from the road, which before we had passed in our haste and ignorance, and we pronounced them as beautiful as any that we saw; yet they seemed to make no account of them there, and, when first we inquired the way to the falls, directed us to Montmorenci, seven miles distant. It was evident that this was the country for waterfalls; that every stream that empties into the St. Lawrence, for some hundreds of miles, must have a great fall or cascade on it, and in its passage through the mountains was, for a short distance, a small Saguenay, with its upright walls. This fall of La Puce, the least remarkable of the four which we visited in this vicinity, we had never heard of till we came to Canada, and yet, so far as I know, there is nothing of the kind in New England to be compared with it. Most travelers in Canada would not hear of it, though they might go so near as to hear it. Since my return I find that in the topographical description of the country mention is made of “two or three romantic falls” on this stream, though we saw and heard of but this one. Ask the inhabitants respecting any stream, if there is a fall on it, and they will perchance tell you of something as interesting as Bashpish or the Catskill, which no traveler has ever seen, or if they have not found it, you may possibly trace up the stream and discover it yourself. Falls there are a drug, and we became quite dissipated in respect to them. We had drank too much

of them. Beside these which I have referred to, there are a thousand other falls on the St. Lawrence and its tributaries which I have not seen nor heard of; and above all there is one which I have heard of, called Niagara, so that I think that this river must be the most remarkable for its falls of any in the world.

At a house near the western boundary of Château Richer, whose master was said to speak a very little English, having recently lived at Quebec, we got lodging for the night. As usual, we had to go down a lane to get round to the south side of the house, where the door was, away from the road. For these Canadian houses have no front door, properly speaking. Every part is for the use of the occupant exclusively, and no part has reference to the traveler or to travel. Every New England house, on the contrary, has a front and principal door opening to the great world, though it may be on the cold side, for it stands on the highway of nations, and the road which runs by it comes from the Old World and goes to the far West; but the Canadian's door opens into his backyard and farm alone, and the road which runs behind his house leads only from the church of one saint to that of another. We found a large family, hired men, wife, and children, just eating their supper. They prepared some for us afterwards. The hired men were a merry crew of short, black-eyed fellows, and the wife a thin-faced, sharp-featured French-Canadian woman. Our host's English staggered us rather more than any French we had heard yet; indeed, we found that even we spoke better French than he did English, and we concluded that a less crime would be committed on the

whole if we spoke French with him, and in no respect aided or abetted his attempts to speak English. We had a long and merry chat with the family this Sunday evening in their spacious kitchen. While my companion smoked a pipe and *parlez-vous'd* with one party, I parleyed and gesticulated to another. The whole family was enlisted, and I kept a little girl writing what was otherwise unintelligible. The geography getting obscure, we called for chalk, and the greasy oiled table-cloth having been wiped, — for it needed no French, but only a sentence from the universal language of looks on my part, to indicate that it needed it, — we drew the St. Lawrence, with its parishes, thereon, and thenceforward went on swimmingly, by turns handling the chalk and committing to the table-cloth what would otherwise have been left in a limbo of unintelligibility. This was greatly to the entertainment of all parties. I was amused to hear how much use they made of the word *oui* in conversation with one another. After repeated single insertions of it, one would suddenly throw back his head at the same time with his chair, and exclaim rapidly, “*Oui! oui! oui! oui!*” like a Yankee driving pigs. Our host told us that the farms thereabouts were generally two acres or three hundred and sixty French feet wide, by one and a half leagues(?), or a little more than four and a half of our miles deep. This use of the word *acre* as long measure arises from the fact that the French acre or arpent, the arpent of Paris, makes a square of ten perches, of eighteen feet each, on a side, a Paris foot being equal to 1.06575 English feet. He said that the wood was cut off about one mile from

the river. The rest was "bush," and beyond that the "Queen's bush." Old as the country is, each landholder bounds on the primitive forest, and fuel bears no price. As I had forgotten the French for *sickle*, they went out in the evening to the barn and got one, and so clenched the certainty of our understanding one another. Then, wishing to learn if they used the cradle, and not knowing any French word for this instrument, I set up the knives and forks on the blade of the sickle to represent one; at which they all exclaimed that they knew and had used it. When *snells* were mentioned they went out in the dark and plucked some. They were pretty good. They said they had three kinds of plums growing wild, — blue, white, and red, the two former much alike and the best. Also they asked me if I would have *des pommes*, some apples, and got me some. They were exceedingly fair and glossy, and it was evident that there was no worm in them; but they were as hard almost as a stone, as if the season was too short to mellow them. We had seen no soft and yellow apples by the roadside. I declined eating one, much as I admired it, observing that it would be good *dans le printemps*, in the spring. In the morning when the mistress had set the eggs a-frying she nodded to a thick-set, jolly-looking fellow, who rolled up his sleeves, seized the long-handled griddle, and commenced a series of revolutions and evolutions with it, ever and anon tossing its contents into the air, where they turned completely topsy-turvy and came down t'other side up; and this he repeated till they were done. That appeared to be his duty when eggs were concerned. I did not chance to witness this performance, but my

companion did, and he pronounced it a masterpiece in its way. This man's farm, with the buildings, cost seven hundred pounds; some smaller ones, two hundred.

In 1827, Montmorenci County, to which the Isle of Orleans has since been added, was nearly as large as Massachusetts, being the eighth county out of forty (in Lower Canada) in extent; but by far the greater part still must continue to be waste land, lying as it were under the walls of Quebec.

I quote these old statistics, not merely because of the difficulty of obtaining more recent ones, but also because I saw there so little evidence of any recent growth. There were in this county, at the same date, five Roman Catholic churches, and no others, five cures and five presbyteries, two schools, two corn-mills, four saw-mills, one carding-mill, — no medical man or notary or lawyer, — five shopkeepers, four taverns (we saw no sign of any, though, after a little hesitation, we were sometimes directed to some undistinguished hut as such), thirty artisans, and five river crafts, whose tonnage amounted to sixty-nine tons! This, notwithstanding that it has a frontage of more than thirty miles on the river, and the population is almost wholly confined to its banks. This describes nearly enough what we saw. But double some of these figures, which, however, its growth will not warrant, and you have described a poverty which not even its severity of climate and ruggedness of soil will suffice to account for. The principal productions were wheat, potatoes, oats, hay, peas, flax, maple-sugar, etc., etc.; linen cloth, or *étouffe du pays*, flannel, and homespun, or *petite étouffe*.

In Lower Canada, according to Bouchette, there are two tenures, — the feudal and the socage. *Tenanciers*, *censitaires*, or holders of land *en roture* pay a small annual rent to the seigneurs, to which “is added some articles of provision, such as a couple of fowls, or a goose, or a bushel of wheat.” “They are also bound to grind their corn at the *moulin banal*, or the lord’s mill, where one fourteenth part of it is taken for his use” as toll. He says that the toll is one twelfth in the United States where competition exists. It is not permitted to exceed one sixteenth in Massachusetts. But worse than this monopolizing of mill rents is what are called *lods et ventes*, or mutation fines, — according to which the seigneur has “a right to a twelfth part of the purchase-money of every estate within his seigniority that changes its owner by sale.” This is over and above the sum paid to the seller. In such cases, moreover, “the lord possesses the *droit de retrait*, which is the privilege of pre-emption at the highest bidden price within forty days after the sale has taken place,” — a right which, however, is said to be seldom exercised. “Lands held by Roman Catholics are further subject to the payment to their curates of one twenty-sixth part of all the grain produced upon them, and to occasional assessments for building and repairing churches,” etc., — a tax to which they are not subject if the proprietors change their faith; but they are not the less attached to their church in consequence. There are, however, various modifications of the feudal tenure. Under the socage tenure, which is that of the townships or more recent settlements, English, Irish, Scotch, and others, and generally of Canada

West, the landholder is wholly unshackled by such conditions as I have quoted, and "is bound to no other obligations than those of allegiance to the king and obedience to the laws." Throughout Canada "a freehold of forty shillings yearly value, or the payment of ten pounds rent annually, is the qualification for voters." In 1846 more than one sixth of the whole population of Canada East were qualified to vote for members of Parliament, — a greater proportion than enjoy a similar privilege in the United States.

The population which we had seen the last two days — I mean the habitants of Montmorenci County — appeared very inferior, intellectually and even physically, to that of New England. In some respects they were incredibly filthy. It was evident that they had not advanced since the settlement of the country, that they were quite behind the age, and fairly represented their ancestors in Normandy a thousand years ago. Even in respect to the common arts of life, they are not so far advanced as a frontier town in the West three years old. They have no money invested in railroad stock, and probably never will have. If they have got a French phrase for a railroad, it is as much as you can expect of them. They are very far from a revolution, have no quarrel with Church or State, but their vice and their virtue is content. As for annexation, they have never dreamed of it; indeed, they have not a clear idea what or where the States are. The English government has been remarkably liberal to its Catholic subjects in Canada, permitting them to wear their own fetters, both political and religious, as far as was possible for subjects.

Their government is even too good for them. Parliament passed "an act [in 1825] to provide for the extinction of feudal and seigniorial rights and burdens on lands in Lower Canada, and for the gradual conversion of those tenures into the tenure of free and common socage," etc. But as late as 1831, at least, the design of the act was likely to be frustrated, owing to the reluctance of the seigniors and peasants. It has been observed by another that the French Canadians do not extend nor perpetuate their influence. The British, Irish, and other immigrants, who have settled the townships, are found to have imitated the American settlers and not the French. They reminded me in this of the Indians, whom they were slow to displace, and to whose habits of life they themselves more readily conformed than the Indians to theirs. The Governor-General Denonville remarked, in 1685, that some had long thought that it was necessary to bring the Indians near them in order to Frenchify (*franciser*) them, but that they had every reason to think themselves in an error; for those who had come near them and were even collected in villages in the midst of the colony had not become French, but the French who had haunted them had become savages. Kalm said, "Though many nations imitate the French customs, yet I observed, on the contrary, that the French in Canada, in many respects, follow the customs of the Indians, with whom they converse every day. They make use of the tobacco-pipes, shoes, garters, and girdles of the Indians. They follow the Indian way of making war with exactness; they mix the same things with tobacco [he might have said that both French and

English learned the use itself of this weed of the Indian]; they make use of the Indian bark-boats, and row them in the Indian way; they wrap square pieces of cloth round their feet instead of stockings; and have adopted many other Indian fashions." Thus, while the descendants of the Pilgrims are teaching the English to make pegged boots, the descendants of the French in Canada are wearing the Indian moccasin still. The French, to their credit be it said, to a certain extent respected the Indians as a separate and independent people, and spoke of them and contrasted themselves with them as the English have never done. They not only went to war with them as allies, but they lived at home with them as neighbors. In 1627 the French king declared "that the descendants" of the French, settled in New France, "and the savages who should be brought to the knowledge of the faith, and should make profession of it, should be counted and reputed French born (*Naturels François*); and as such could emigrate to France, when it seemed good to them, and there acquire, will, inherit, etc., etc., without obtaining letters of naturalization." When the English had possession of Quebec, in 1630, the Indians, attempting to practice the same familiarity with them that they had with the French, were driven out of their houses with blows; which accident taught them a difference between the two races, and attached them yet more to the French. The impression made on me was that the French Canadians were even sharing the fate of the Indians, or at least gradually disappearing in what is called the Saxon current.

The English did not come to America from a mere

love of adventure, nor to truck with or convert the savages, nor to hold offices under the crown, as the French to a great extent did, but to live in earnest and with freedom. The latter overran a great extent of country, selling strong water, and collecting its furs, and converting its inhabitants, — or at least baptizing its dying infants (*enfants moribonds*), — without improving it. First went the *coureur de bois* with the *eau de vie*; then followed, if he did not precede, the heroic missionary with the *eau d'immortalité*. It was freedom to hunt, and fish, and convert, not to work, that they sought. Hontan says that the *coureurs de bois* lived like sailors ashore. In no part of the Seventeenth Century could the French be said to have had a foothold in Canada; they held only by the fur of the wild animals which they were exterminating. To enable the poor seigneurs to get their living, it was permitted by a decree passed in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, in 1685, “to all nobles and gentlemen settled in Canada, to engage in commerce, without being called to account or reputed to have done anything derogatory.” The reader can infer to what extent they had engaged in agriculture, and how their farms must have shone by this time. The New England youth, on the other hand, were never *coureurs de bois* nor *voyageurs*, but backwoodsmen and sailors rather. Of all nations the English undoubtedly have proved hitherto that they had the most business here.

Yet I am not sure but I have most sympathy with that spirit of adventure which distinguished the French and Spaniards of those days, and made them especially the explorers of the American Continent, — which so

early carried the former to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi on the north, and the latter to the same river on the south. It was long before our frontiers reached their settlements in the West. So far as inland discovery was concerned, the adventurous spirit of the English was that of sailors who land but for a day, and their enterprise the enterprise of traders.

There was apparently a greater equality of condition among the habitants of Montmorenci County than in New England. They are an almost exclusively agricultural, and so far independent population, each family producing nearly all the necessaries of life for itself. If the Canadian wants energy, perchance he possesses those virtues, social and others, which the Yankee lacks, in which case he cannot be regarded as a poor man.

CHAPTER IV

THE WALLS OF QUEBEC

AFTER spending the night at a farmhouse in Château Richer, about a dozen miles northeast of Quebec, we set out on our return to the city. We stopped at the next house, a picturesque old stone mill, over the *Chipré*, — for so the name sounded, — such as you will nowhere see in the States, and asked the millers the age of the mill. They went upstairs to call the master; but the crabbed old miser asked why we wanted to know, and would tell us only for some compensation. I wanted French to give him a piece of my mind. I had got enough to talk on a pinch, but not to quarrel, so I had to come away, looking all I would have said. This was the utmost incivility we met with in Canada. In Beauport, within a few miles of Quebec, we turned aside to look at a church which was just being completed, — a very large and handsome edifice of stone, with a green bough stuck in its gable, of some significance to Catholics. The comparative wealth of the Church in this country was apparent; for in this village we did not see one good house besides. They were all humble cottages; and yet this appeared to me a more imposing structure than any church in Boston. But I am no judge of these things.

Reëntering Quebec through St. John's Gate, we took a caleche in Market Square for the Falls of the Chau-

dière, about nine miles southwest of the city, for which we were to pay so much, besides forty sous for tolls. The driver, as usual, spoke French only. The number of these vehicles is very great for so small a town. They are like one of our chaises that has lost its top, only stouter and longer in the body, with a seat for the driver where the dasher is with us, and broad leather ears on each side to protect the riders from the wheel and keep children from falling out. They had an easy jaunting look, which, as our hours were numbered, persuaded us to be riders. We met with them on every road near Quebec these days, each with its complement of two inquisitive-looking foreigners and a Canadian driver, the former evidently enjoying their novel experience, for commonly it is only the horse whose language you do not understand; but they were one remove further from him by the intervention of an equally unintelligible driver. We crossed the St. Lawrence to Point Levi in a French-Canadian ferry-boat, which was inconvenient and dirty, and managed with great noise and bustle. The current was very strong and tumultuous; and the boat tossed enough to make some sick, though it was only a mile across; yet the wind was not to be compared with that of the day before, and we saw that the Canadians had a good excuse for not taking us over to the Isle of Orleans in a pirogue, however shiftless they may be for not having provided any other conveyance. The route which we took to the Chaudière did not afford us those views of Quebec which we had expected, and the country and inhabitants appeared less interesting to a traveler than those we had seen. The Falls of the

Chaudière are three miles from its mouth on the south side of the St. Lawrence. Though they were the largest which I saw in Canada, I was not proportionately interested by them, probably from satiety. I did not see any peculiar propriety in the name *Chaudière*, or caldron. I saw here the most brilliant rainbow that I ever imagined. It was just across the stream below the precipice, formed on the mist which this tremendous fall produced; and I stood on a level with the keystone of its arch. It was not a few faint prismatic colors merely, but a full semicircle, only four or five rods in diameter, though as wide as usual, so intensely bright as to pain the eye, and apparently as substantial as an arch of stone. It changed its position and colors as we moved, and was the brighter because the sun shone so clearly and the mist was so thick. Evidently a picture painted on mist for the men and animals that came to the falls to look at; but for what special purpose beyond this, I know not. At the farthest point in this ride, and when most inland, unexpectedly at a turn in the road we descried the frowning citadel of Quebec in the horizon, like the beak of a bird of prey. We returned by the river road under the bank, which is very high, abrupt, and rocky. When we were opposite to Quebec, I was surprised to see that in the Lower Town, under the shadow of the rock, the lamps were lit, twinkling not unlike crystals in a cavern, while the citadel high above, and we, too, on the south shore, were in broad daylight. As we were too late for the ferry-boat that night, we put up at a *maison de pension* at Point Levi. The usual two-story stove was here placed against an opening in the

partition shaped like a fireplace, and so warmed several rooms. We could not understand their French here very well, but the *potage* was just like what we had had before. There were many small chambers with doorways, but no doors. The walls of our chamber, all around and overhead, were neatly ceiled, and the timbers cased with wood unpainted. The pillows were checkered and tasseled, and the usual long-pointed red woolen or worsted nightcap was placed on each. I pulled mine out to see how it was made. It was in the form of a double cone, one end tucked into the other; just such, it appeared, as I saw men wearing all day in the streets. Probably I should have put it on if the cold had been then, as it is sometimes there, thirty or forty degrees below zero.

When we landed at Quebec the next morning a man lay on his back on the wharf, apparently dying, in the midst of a crowd and directly in the path of the horses, groaning, "O ma conscience!" I thought that he pronounced his French more distinctly than any I heard, as if the dying had already acquired the accents of a universal language. Having secured the only unengaged berths in the Lord Sydenham steamer, which was to leave Quebec before sundown, and being resolved, now that I had seen somewhat of the country, to get an idea of the city, I proceeded to walk round the Upper Town, or fortified portion, which is two miles and three quarters in circuit, alone, as near as I could get to the cliff and the walls, like a rat looking for a hole; going round by the southwest, where there is but a single street between the cliff and the water, and up the long wooden

stairs, through the suburbs northward to the King's Woodyard, which I thought must have been a long way from his fireplace, and under the cliffs of the St. Charles, where the drains issue under the walls, and the walls are loopholed for musketry; so returning by Mountain Street and Prescott Gate to the Upper Town. Having found my way by an obscure passage near the St. Louis Gate to the glacis on the north of the citadel proper, — I believe that I was the only visitor then in the city who got in there, — I enjoyed a prospect nearly as good as from within the citadel itself, which I had explored some days before. As I walked on the glacis I heard the sound of a bagpipe from the soldiers' dwellings in the rock, and was further soothed and affected by the sight of a soldier's cat walking up a cleated plank into a high loophole designed for *mus-catry*, as serene as Wisdom herself, and with a gracefully waving motion of her tail, as if her ways were ways of pleasantness and all her paths were peace. Scaling a slat fence, where a small force might have checked me, I got out of the esplanade into the Governor's Garden, and read the well-known inscription on Wolfe and Montcalm's monument, which for saying much in little, and that to the purpose, undoubtedly deserved the prize medal which it received: —

MORTEM . VIRTUS . COMMUNEM .

FAMAM . HISTORIA .

MONUMENTUM . POSTERITAS .

DEDIT

(Valor gave them one death, history one fame, posterity one monument.) The Government Garden has for

nosegays, amid kitchen vegetables, beside the common garden flowers, the usual complement of cannon directed toward some future and possible enemy. I then returned up St. Louis Street to the esplanade and ramparts there, and went round the Upper Town once more, though I was very tired, this time on the *inside* of the wall; for I knew that the wall was the main thing in Quebec, and had cost a great deal of money, and therefore I must make the most of it. In fact, these are the only remarkable walls we have in North America, though we have a good deal of Virginia fence, it is true. Moreover, I cannot say but I yielded in some measure to the soldier instinct, and, having but a short time to spare, thought it best to examine the wall thoroughly, that I might be the better prepared if I should ever be called that way again in the service of my country. I committed all the gates to memory, in their order, which did not cost me so much trouble as it would have done at the hundred-gated city, there being only five; nor were they so hard to remember as those seven of Bœotian Thebes; and, moreover, I thought that, if seven champions were enough against the latter, one would be enough against Quebec, though he bore for all armor and device only an umbrella and a bundle. I took the nunneries as I went, for I had learned to distinguish them by the blinds; and I observed also the foundling hospitals and the convents, and whatever was attached to, or in the vicinity of the walls. All the rest I omitted, as naturally as one would the inside of an inedible shell-fish. These were the only pearls, and the wall the only mother-of-pearl for me. Quebec is chiefly famous for the thickness of its

parietal bones. The technical terms of its conchology may stagger a beginner a little at first, such as *banlieue*, *esplanade*, *glacis*, *ravelin*, *cavalier*, etc., etc., but with the aid of a comprehensive dictionary you soon learn the nature of your ground. I was surprised at the extent of the artillery barracks, built so long ago, — *Casernes Nouvelles*, they used to be called, — nearly six hundred feet in length by forty in depth, where the sentries, like peripatetic philosophers, were so absorbed in thought as not to notice me when I passed in and out at the gates. Within are “small arms of every description, sufficient for the equipment of twenty thousand men,” so arranged as to give a startling *coup d’œil* to strangers. I did not enter, not wishing to get a black eye; for they are said to be “in a state of complete repair and readiness for immediate use.” Here, for a short time, I lost sight of the wall, but I recovered it again on emerging from the barrack yard. There I met with a Scotchman who appeared to have business with the wall, like myself; and, being thus mutually drawn together by a similarity of tastes, we had a little conversation *sub moenibus*, that is, by an angle of the wall, which sheltered us. He lived about thirty miles northwest of Quebec; had been nineteen years in the country; said he was disappointed that he was not brought to America after all, but found himself still under British rule and where his own language was not spoken; that many Scotch, Irish, and English were disappointed in like manner, and either went to the States or pushed up the river to Canada West, nearer to the States, and where their language was spoken. He talked of visiting the States some time; and, as he seemed

ignorant of geography, I warned him that it was one thing to visit the State of Massachusetts, and another to visit the State of California. He said it was colder there than usual at that season, and he was lucky to have brought his thick togue, or frock-coat, with him; thought it would snow, and then be pleasant and warm. That is the way we are always thinking. However, his words were music to me in my thin hat and sack.

At the ramparts on the cliff near the old Parliament House I counted twenty-four thirty-two-pounders in a row, pointed over the harbor, with their balls piled pyramid-wise between them, — there are said to be in all about one hundred and eighty guns mounted at Quebec, — all which were faithfully kept dusted by officials, in accordance with the motto, “In time of peace prepare for war;” but I saw no preparations for peace: she was plainly an uninvited guest.

Having thus completed the circuit of this fortress, both within and without, I went no farther by the wall for fear that I should become wall-eyed. However, I think that I deserve to be made a member of the Royal Sappers and Miners.

In short, I observed everywhere the most perfect arrangements for keeping a wall in order, not even permitting the lichens to grow on it, which some think an ornament; but then I saw no cultivation nor pasturing within it to pay for the outlay, and cattle were strictly forbidden to feed on the glacis under the severest penalties. Where the dogs get their milk I don't know, and I fear it is bloody at best.

The citadel of Quebec says, “*I will live here, and you*

shan't prevent me." To which you return, that you have not the slightest objection; live and let live. The Martello towers looked, for all the world, exactly like abandoned windmills which had not had a grist to grind these hundred years. Indeed, the whole castle here was a "folly," — England's folly, — and, in more senses than one, a castle in the air. The inhabitants and the government are gradually waking up to a sense of this truth; for I heard something said about their abandoning the wall around the Upper Town, and confining the fortifications to the citadel of forty acres. Of course they will finally reduce their intrenchments to the circumference of their own brave hearts.

The most modern fortifications have an air of antiquity about them; they have the aspect of ruins in better or worse repair from the day they are built, because they are not really the work of this age. The very place where the soldier resides has a peculiar tendency to become old and dilapidated, as the word *barrack* implies. I couple all fortifications in my mind with the dismantled Spanish forts to be found in so many parts of the world; and if in any place they are not actually dismantled, it is because that there the intellect of the inhabitants is dismantled. The commanding officer of an old fort near Valdivia in South America, when a traveler remarked to him that, with one discharge, his gun-carriages would certainly fall to pieces, gravely replied, "No, I am sure, sir, they would stand two." Perhaps the guns of Quebec would stand three. Such structures carry us back to the Middle Ages, the siege of Jerusalem, and St. Jean d'Acre, and the days of the Bucaniers. In the armory of the citadel

they showed me a clumsy implement, long since useless, which they called a Lombard gun. I thought that their whole citadel was such a Lombard gun, fit object for the museums of the curious. Such works do not consist with the development of the intellect. Huge stone structures of all kinds, both in their erection and by their influence when erected, rather oppress than liberate the mind. They are tombs for the souls of men, as frequently for their bodies also. The sentinel with his musket beside a man with his umbrella is spectral. There is not sufficient reason for his existence. Does my friend there, with a bullet resting on half an ounce of powder, think that he needs that argument in conversing with me? The fort was the first institution that was founded here, and it is amusing to read in Champlain how assiduously they worked at it almost from the first day of the settlement. The founders of the colony thought this an excellent site for a wall, — and no doubt it was a better site, in some respects, for a wall than for a city, — but it chanced that a city got behind it. It chanced, too, that a Lower Town got before it, and clung like an oyster to the outside of the crags, as you may see at low tide. It is as if you were to come to a country village surrounded by palisades in the old Indian fashion, — interesting only as a relic of antiquity and barbarism. A fortified town is like a man cased in the heavy armor of antiquity, with a horse-load of broadswords and small arms slung to him, endeavoring to go about his business. Or is this an indispensable machinery for the good government of the country? The inhabitants of California succeed pretty well, and are doing better and better every day, without any such

institution. What use has this fortress served, to look at it even from the soldiers' point of view? At first the French took care of it; yet Wolfe sailed by it with impunity, and took the town of Quebec without experiencing any hindrance at last from its fortifications. They were only the bone for which the parties fought. Then the English began to take care of it. So of any fort in the world, — that in Boston Harbor, for instance. We shall at length hear that an enemy sailed by it in the night, for it cannot sail itself, and both it and its inhabitants are always benighted. How often we read that the enemy occupied a position which commanded the old, and so the fort was evacuated! Have not the school-house and the printing-press occupied a position which commands such a fort as this?

However, this is a ruin kept in remarkably good repair. There are some eight hundred or thousand men there to exhibit it. One regiment goes bare-legged to increase the attraction. If you wish to study the muscles of the leg about the knee, repair to Quebec. This universal exhibition in Canada of the tools and sinews of war reminded me of the keeper of a menagerie showing his animals' claws. It was the English leopard showing his claws. Always the royal something or other; as at the menagerie, the Royal Bengal Tiger. Silliman states that "the cold is so intense in the winter nights, particularly on Cape Diamond, that the sentinels cannot stand it more than one hour, and are relieved at the expiration of that time;" "and even, as it is said, at much shorter intervals, in case of the most extreme cold." What a natural or unnatural fool must that

soldier be — to say nothing of his government — who, when quicksilver is freezing and blood is ceasing to be quick, will stand to have his face frozen, watching the walls of Quebec, though, so far as they are concerned, both honest and dishonest men all the world over have been in their beds nearly half a century, — or at least for that space travelers have visited Quebec only as they would read history! I shall never again wake up in a colder night than usual, but I shall think how rapidly the sentinels are relieving one another on the walls of Quebec, their quicksilver being all frozen, as if apprehensive that some hostile Wolfe may even then be scaling the Heights of Abraham, or some persevering Arnold about to issue from the wilderness; some Malay or Japanese, perchance, coming round by the northwest coast, have chosen that moment to assault the citadel! Why, I should as soon expect to find the sentinels still relieving one another on the walls of Nineveh, which have so long been buried to the world. What a troublesome thing a wall is! I thought it was to defend me, and not I it! Of course, if they had no wall, they would not need to have any sentinels.

You might venture to advertise this farm as well fenced with substantial stone walls (saying nothing about the eight hundred Highlanders and Royal Irish who are required to keep them from toppling down); stock and tools to go with the land if desired. But it would not be wise for the seller to exhibit his farm-book.

Why should Canada, wild and unsettled as it is, impress us as an older country than the States, unless because her institutions are old? All things appeared

to contend there, as I have implied, with a certain rust of antiquity, such as forms on old armor and iron guns, — the rust of conventions and formalities. It is said that the metallic roofs of Montreal and Quebec keep sound and bright for forty years in some cases. But if the rust was not on the tinned roofs and spires, it was on the inhabitants and their institutions. Yet the work of burnishing goes briskly forward. I imagined that the government vessels at the wharves were laden with rottenstone and oxalic acid, — that is what the first ship from England in the spring comes freighted with, — and the hands of the Colonial legislature are cased in wash-leather. The principal exports must be *gunny* bags, verdigris, and iron rust. Those who first built this fort, coming from Old France with the memory and tradition of feudal days and customs weighing on them, were unquestionably behind their age; and those who now inhabit and repair it are behind their ancestors or predecessors. Those old chevaliers thought that they could transplant the feudal system to America. It has been set out, but it has not thriven. Notwithstanding that Canada was settled first, and, unlike New England, for a long series of years enjoyed the fostering care of the mother country; notwithstanding that, as Charlevoix tells us, it had more of the ancient *noblesse* among its early settlers than any other of the French colonies, and perhaps than all the others together, there are in both the Canadas but 600,000 of French descent to-day, — about half so many as the population of Massachusetts. The whole population of both Canadas is but about 1,700,000 Canadians, English, Irish, Scotch, Indians, and all, put together!

Samuel Laing, in his essay on the Northmen, to whom especially, rather than the Saxons, he refers the energy and indeed the excellence of the English character, observes that, when they occupied Scandinavia, "each man possessed his lot of land without reference to, or acknowledgment of, any other man, without any local chief to whom his military service or other quit-rent for his land was due, — without tenure from, or duty or obligation to, any superior, real or fictitious, except the general sovereign. The individual settler held his land, as his descendants in Norway still express it, by the same right as the King held his crown, by *udal* right, or *adel*, — that is, noble right." The French have occupied Canada, not *udally*, or by noble right, but *feudally*, or by ignoble right. They are a nation of peasants.

It was evident that, both on account of the feudal system and the aristocratic government, a private man was not worth so much in Canada as in the United States; and, if your wealth in any measure consists in manliness, in originality and independence, you had better stay here. How could a peaceable, freethinking man live neighbor to the Forty-ninth Regiment? A New-Englander would naturally be a bad citizen, probably a rebel, there, — certainly if he were already a rebel at home. I suspect that a poor man who is not servile is a much rarer phenomenon there and in England than in the Northern United States. An Englishman, methinks, — not to speak of other European nations, — habitually regards himself merely as a constituent part of the English nation; he is a member of

the royal regiment of Englishmen, and is proud of his company, as he has reason to be proud of it. But an American — one who has made a tolerable use of his opportunities — cares, comparatively, little about such things, and is advantageously nearer to the primitive and the ultimate condition of man in these respects. It is a government, that English one, — like most other European ones, — that cannot afford to be forgotten, as you would naturally forget it; under which one cannot be wholesomely neglected, and grow up a man and not an Englishman merely, — cannot be a poet even without danger of being made poet-laureate! Give me a country where it is the most natural thing in the world for a government that does not understand you to let you alone. One would say that a true Englishman could speculate only within bounds. (It is true the Americans have proved that they, in more than one sense, can *speculate* without bounds.) He has to pay his respects to so many things, that, before he knows it, he *may* have paid away all he is worth. What makes the United States government, on the whole, more tolerable — I mean for us lucky white men — is the fact that there is so much less of government with us. Here it is only once in a month or a year that a man *needs* remember that institution; and those who go to Congress can play the game of the Kilkenny cats there without fatal consequences to those who stay at home, their term is so short; but in Canada you are reminded of the government every day. It parades itself before you. It is not content to be the servant, but will be the master; and every day it goes out to the Plains of Abraham or

to the Champ de Mars and exhibits itself and toots. Everywhere there appeared an attempt to make and to preserve trivial and otherwise transient distinctions. In the streets of Montreal and Quebec you met not only with soldiers in red, and shuffling priests in unmistakable black and white, with Sisters of Charity gone into mourning for their deceased relative, — not to mention the nuns of various orders depending on the fashion of a tear, of whom you heard, — but youths belonging to some seminary or other, wearing coats edged with white, who looked as if their expanding hearts were already repressed with a piece of tape. In short, the inhabitants of Canada appeared to be suffering between two fires, — the soldiery and the priesthood.

CHAPTER V

THE SCENERY OF QUEBEC; AND THE RIVER ST. LAWRENCE

ABOUT twelve o'clock this day, being in the Lower Town, I looked up at the signal-gun by the flagstaff on Cape Diamond, and saw a soldier up in the heavens there making preparations to fire it, — both he and the gun in bold relief against the sky. Soon after, being warned by the boom of the gun to look up again, there was only the cannon in the sky, the smoke just blowing away from it, as if the soldier, having touched it off, had concealed himself for effect, leaving the sound to echo grandly from shore to shore, and far up and down the river. This answered the purpose of a dinner-horn.

There are no such restaurants in Quebec or Montreal as there are in Boston. I hunted an hour or two in vain in this town to find one, till I lost my appetite. In one house, called a restaurant, where lunches were advertised, I found only tables covered with bottles and glasses innumerable, containing apparently a sample of every liquid that has been known since the earth dried up after the flood, but no scent of solid food did I perceive gross enough to excite a hungry mouse. In short, I saw nothing to tempt me there, but a large map of Canada against the wall. In another place I once more got as far as the bottles, and then asked for a bill of fare; was told to walk up stairs; had no bill of fare,

nothing but fare. "Have you any pies or puddings?" I inquired, for I am obliged to keep my savageness in check by a low diet. "No, sir; we've nice mutton-chop, roast beef, beefsteak, cutlets," and so on. A burly Englishman, who was in the midst of the siege of a piece of roast beef, and of whom I have never had a front view to this day, turned half round, with his mouth half full, and remarked, "You'll find no pies nor puddings in Quebec, sir; they don't make any here." I found that it was even so, and therefore bought some musty cake and some fruit in the open market-place. This market-place by the waterside, where the old women sat by their tables in the open air, amid a dense crowd jabbering all languages, was the best place in Quebec to observe the people; and the ferry-boats, continually coming and going with their motley crews and cargoes, added much to the entertainment. I also saw them getting water from the river, for Quebec is supplied with water by cart and barrel. This city impressed me as wholly foreign and French, for I scarcely heard the sound of the English language in the streets. More than three fifths of the inhabitants are of French origin; and if the traveler did not visit the fortifications particularly, he might not be reminded that the English have any foothold here; and, in any case, if he looked no farther than Quebec, they would appear to have planted themselves in Canada only as they have in Spain at Gibraltar; and he who plants upon a rock cannot expect much increase. The novel sights and sounds by the waterside made me think of such ports as Boulogne, Dieppe, Rouen, and Havre-de-Grâce, which I have never seen; but I

have no doubt that they present similar scenes. I was much amused from first to last with the sounds made by the charette and caleche drivers. It was that part of their foreign language that you heard the most of, — the French they talked to their horses, — and which they talked the loudest. It was a more novel sound to me than the French of conversation. The streets resounded with the cries, “*Qui donc !*” “*Marche tôt !*” I suspect that many of our horses which came from Canada would prick up their ears at these sounds. Of the shops, I was most attracted by those where furs and Indian works were sold, as containing articles of genuine Canadian manufacture. I have been told that two townsmen of mine, who were interested in horticulture, traveling once in Canada, and being in Quebec, thought it would be a good opportunity to obtain seeds of the real Canada crookneck squash. So they went into a shop where such things were advertised, and inquired for the same. The shopkeeper had the very thing they wanted. “But are you sure,” they asked, “that these are the genuine Canada crookneck?” “Oh, yes, gentlemen,” answered he, “they are a lot which I have received directly from Boston.” I resolved that my Canada crookneck seeds should be such as had grown in Canada.

Too much has not been said about the scenery of Quebec. The fortifications of Cape Diamond are omnipresent. They preside, they frown over the river and surrounding country. You travel ten, twenty, thirty miles up or down the river’s banks, you ramble fifteen miles amid the hills on either side, and then, when you

have long since forgotten them, perchance slept on them by the way, at a turn of the road or of your body, there they are still, with their geometry against the sky. The child that is born and brought up thirty miles distant, and has never traveled to the city, reads his country's history, sees the level lines of the citadel amid the cloud-built citadels in the western horizon, and is told that that is Quebec. No wonder if Jacques Cartier's pilot exclaimed in Norman French, "Que bec!" (What a beak!) when he saw this cape, as some suppose. Every modern traveler involuntarily uses a similar expression. Particularly it is said that its sudden apparition on turning Point Levi makes a memorable impression on him who arrives by water. The view from Cape Diamond has been compared by European travelers with the most remarkable views of a similar kind in Europe, such as from Edinburgh Castle, Gibraltar, Cintra, and others, and preferred by many. A main peculiarity in this, compared with other views which I have beheld, is that it is from the ramparts of a fortified city, and not from a solitary and majestic river cape alone, that this view is obtained. I associate the beauty of Quebec with the steel-like and flashing air, which may be peculiar to that season of the year, in which the blue flowers of the succory and some late goldenrods and buttercups on the summit of Cape Diamond were almost my only companions, — the former bluer than the heavens they faced. Yet even I yielded in some degree to the influence of historical associations, and found it hard to attend to the geology of Cape Diamond or the botany of the Plains of Abraham. I still remember the harbor far

beneath me, sparkling like silver in the sun, the answering highlands of Point Levi on the southeast, the frowning Cap Tourmente abruptly bounding the seaward view far in the northeast, the villages of Lorette and Charlesbourg on the north, and, further west, the distant Val Cartier, sparkling with white cottages, hardly removed by distance through the clear air, — not to mention a few blue mountains along the horizon in that direction. You look out from the ramparts of the citadel beyond the frontiers of civilization. Yonder small group of hills, according to the guide-book, forms “the portal of the wilds which are trodden only by the feet of the Indian hunters as far as Hudson’s Bay.” It is but a few years since Bouchette declared that the country ten leagues north of the British capital of North America was as little known as the middle of Africa. Thus the citadel under my feet, and all historical associations, were swept away again by an influence from the wilds and from Nature, as if the beholder had read her history, — an influence which, like the Great River itself, flowed from the Arctic fastnesses and Western forests with irresistible tide over all.

The most interesting object in Canada to me was the River St. Lawrence, known far and wide, and for centuries, as the Great River. Cartier, its discoverer, sailed up it as far as Montreal in 1535, — nearly a century before the coming of the Pilgrims; and I have seen a pretty accurate map of it so far, containing the city of “Hochelaga” and the river “Saguenay,” in Ortelius’s *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, printed at Antwerp in 1575, — the first edition having appeared in

1570, — in which the famous cities of “Norumbega” and “Orsinora” stand on the rough-blocked continent where New England is to-day, and the fabulous but unfortunate Isle of Demons, and Frisland, and others, lie off and on in the unfrequented sea, some of them prowling near what is now the course of the Cunard steamers. In this ponderous folio of the “Ptolemy of his age,” said to be the first general atlas published after the revival of the sciences in Europe, only one page of which is devoted to the topography of the *Novus Orbis*, the St. Lawrence is the only large river, whether drawn from fancy or from observation, on the east side of North America. It was famous in Europe before the other rivers of North America were heard of, notwithstanding that the mouth of the Mississippi is said to have been discovered first, and its stream was reached by Soto not long after; but the St. Lawrence had attracted settlers to its cold shores long before the Mississippi, or even the Hudson, was known to the world. Schoolcraft was misled by Gallatin into saying that Narvaez discovered the Mississippi. De Vega does *not* say so. The first explorers declared that the summer in that country was as warm as France, and they named one of the bays in the Gulf of St. Lawrence the Bay of Chaleur, or of warmth; but they said nothing about the winter being as cold as Greenland. In the manuscript account of Cartier’s second voyage, attributed by some to that navigator himself, it is called “the greatest river, without comparison, that is known to have ever been seen.” The savages told him that it was the “chemin du Canada,” — the highway to Canada, —

“which goes so far that no man had ever been to the end that they had heard.” The Saguenay, one of its tributaries, which the panorama has made known to New England within three years, is described by Cartier, in 1535, and still more particularly by Jean Alphonse, in 1542, who adds, “I think that this river comes from the sea of Cathay, for in this place there issues a strong current, and there runs there a terrible tide.” The early explorers saw many whales and other sea-monsters far up the St. Lawrence. Champlain, in his map, represents a whale spouting in the harbor of Quebec, three hundred and sixty miles from what is called the mouth of the river; and Charlevoix takes his reader to the summit of Cape Diamond to see the “porpoises, white as snow,” sporting on the surface of the harbor of Quebec. And Boucher says in 1664, “from there [Tadoussac] to Montreal is found a great quantity of *Marsouins blancs*.” Several whales have been taken pretty high up the river since I was there. P. A. Gosse, in his “Canadian Naturalist,” p. 171 (London, 1840), speaks of “the white dolphin of the St. Lawrence (*Delphinus Canadensis*),” as considered different from those of the sea. “The Natural History Society of Montreal offered a prize, a few years ago, for an essay on the *Cetacea* of the St. Lawrence, which was, I believe, handed in.” In Champlain’s day it was commonly called “the Great River of Canada.” More than one nation has claimed it. In Ogilby’s “America of 1670,” in the map *Novi Belgii*, it is called “De Groote River van Niew Nederlandt.” It bears different names in different parts of its course, as it flows through what were formerly the

territories of different nations. From the Gulf to Lake Ontario it is called at present the St. Lawrence; from Montreal to the same place it is frequently called the Cateraqui; and higher up it is known successively as the Niagara, Detroit, St. Clair, St. Mary's, and St. Louis rivers. Humboldt, speaking of the Orinoco, says that this name is unknown in the interior of the country; so likewise the tribes that dwell about the sources of the St. Lawrence have never heard the name which it bears in the lower part of its course. It rises near another father of waters, — the Mississippi, — issuing from a remarkable spring far up in the woods, called Lake Superior, fifteen hundred miles in circumference; and several other springs there are thereabouts which feed it. It makes such a noise in its tumbling down at one place as is heard all round the world. Bouchette, the Surveyor-General of the Canadas, calls it "the most splendid river on the globe;" says that it is two thousand statute miles long (more recent geographers make it four or five hundred miles longer); that at the Rivière du Sud it is eleven miles wide; at the Traverse, thirteen; at the Paps of Matane, twenty-five; at the Seven Islands, seventy-three; and at its mouth, from Cape Rosier to the Mingan Settlements in Labrador, near one hundred and five (?) miles wide. According to Captain Bayfield's recent chart it is about *ninety-six* geographical miles wide at the latter place, measuring at right angles with the stream. It has much the largest estuary, regarding both length and breadth, of any river on the globe. Humboldt says that the River Plate, which has the broadest estuary of the South American rivers, is

ninety-two geographical miles wide at its mouth; also he found the Orinoco to be more than three miles wide at five hundred and sixty miles from its mouth; but he does not tell us that ships of six hundred tons can sail up it so far, as they can up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, — an equal distance. If he had described a fleet of such ships at anchor in a city's port so far inland, we should have got a very different idea of the Orinoco. Perhaps Charlevoix describes the St. Lawrence truly as the most *navigable* river in the world. Between Montreal and Quebec it averages about two miles wide. The tide is felt as far up as Three Rivers, four hundred and thirty-two miles, which is as far as from Boston to Washington. As far up as Cap aux Oyes, sixty or seventy miles below Quebec, Kalm found a great part of the plants near the shore to be marine, as glasswort (*Salicornia*), seaside pease (*Pisum maritimum*), sea-milkwort (*Glaux*), beach-grass (*Psamma arenaria*), seaside plantain (*Plantago maritima*), the sea-rocket (*Bunias cakile*), etc.

The geographer Guyot observes that the Marañon is three thousand miles long, and gathers its waters from a surface of a million and a half square miles; that the Mississippi is also three thousand miles long, but its basin covers only from eight to nine hundred thousand square miles; that the St. Lawrence is eighteen hundred miles long, and its basin covers more than a million square miles (Darby says five hundred thousand); and speaking of the lakes, he adds, "These vast fresh-water seas, together with the St. Lawrence, cover a surface of nearly one hundred thousand square miles, and it has been calculated that they contain about one half of all

the fresh water on the surface of our planet." But all these calculations are necessarily very rude and inaccurate. Its tributaries, the Ottawa, St. Maurice, and Saguenay, are great rivers themselves. The latter is said to be more than one thousand (?) feet deep at its mouth, while its cliffs rise perpendicularly an equal distance above its surface. Pilots say there are no soundings till one hundred and fifty miles up the St. Lawrence. The greatest sounding in the river, given on Bayfield's chart of the gulf and river, is two hundred and twenty-eight fathoms. McTaggart, an engineer, observes that "the Ottawa is larger than all the rivers in Great Britain, were they running in one." The traveler Grey writes: "A dozen Danubies, Rhines, Taguses, and Thameses would be nothing to twenty miles of fresh water in breadth [as where he happened to be], from ten to forty fathoms in depth." And again: "There is not perhaps in the whole extent of this immense continent so fine an approach to it as by the river St. Lawrence. In the Southern States you have, in general, a level country for many miles inland; here you are introduced at once into a majestic scenery, where everything is on a grand scale, — mountains, woods, lakes, rivers, precipices, waterfalls."

We have not yet the data for a minute comparison of the St. Lawrence with the South American rivers; but it is obvious that, taking it in connection with its lakes, its estuary, and its falls, it easily bears off the palm from all the rivers on the globe; for though, as Bouchette observes, it may not carry to the ocean a greater volume of water than the Amazon and Mississippi, its surface

and cubic mass are far greater than theirs. But, unfortunately, this noble river is closed by ice from the beginning of December to the middle of April. The arrival of the first vessel from England when the ice breaks up is, therefore, a great event, as when the salmon, shad, and alewives come up a river in the spring to relieve the famishing inhabitants on its banks. Who can say what would have been the history of this continent if, as has been suggested, this river had emptied into the sea where New York stands!

After visiting the Museum and taking one more look at the wall, I made haste to the Lord Sydenham steamer, which at five o'clock was to leave for Montreal. I had already taken a seat on deck, but finding that I had still an hour and a half to spare, and remembering that large map of Canada which I had seen in the parlor of the restaurant in my search after pudding, and realizing that I might never see the like out of the country, I returned thither, asked liberty to look at the map, rolled up the mahogany table, put my handkerchief on it, stood on it, and copied all I wanted before the maid came in and said to me standing on the table, "Some gentlemen want the room, sir;" and I retreated without having broken the neck of a single bottle, or my own, very thankful and willing to pay for all the solid food I had got. We were soon abreast of Cap Rouge, eight miles above Quebec, after we got under weigh. It was in this place, then called *Fort du France Roy*, that the Sieur de Roberval with his company, having sent home two of his three ships, spent the winter of 1542-43. It appears that they fared in the following manner (I

translate from the original): "Each mess had only two loaves, weighing each a pound, and half a pound of beef. They ate pork for dinner, with half a pound of butter, and beef for supper, with about two handfuls of beans without butter. Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays they ate salted cod, and sometimes green, for dinner, with butter; and porpoise and beans for supper. Monsieur Roberval administered good justice, and punished each according to his offense. One, named Michel Gaillon, was hung for theft; John of Nantes was put in irons and imprisoned for his fault; and others were likewise put in irons; and many were whipped, both men and women; by which means they lived in peace and tranquillity." In an account of a voyage up this river, printed in the Jesuit Relations in the year 1664, it is said: "It was an interesting navigation for us in ascending the river from Cap Tourmente to Quebec, to see on this side and on that, for the space of eight leagues, the farms and the houses of the company, built by our French, all along these shores. On the right, the seigniories of Beauport, of Notre Dame des Anges; and on the left, this beautiful Isle of Orleans." The same traveler names among the fruits of the country observed at the Isles of Richelieu, at the head of Lake St. Peter, "kinds (*des espèces*) of little apples or haws (*senelles*), and of pears, which only ripen with the frost."

Night came on before we had passed the high banks. We had come from Montreal to Quebec in one night. The return voyage, against the stream, takes but an hour longer. Jacques Cartier, the first white man who is known to have ascended this river, thus speaks of his

voyage from what is now Quebec to the foot of Lake St. Peter, or about half-way to Montreal: "From the said day, the 19th, even to the 28th of the said month [September, 1535], we had been navigating up the said river without losing hour or day, during which time we had seen and found as much country and lands as level as we could desire, full of the most beautiful trees in the world," which he goes on to describe. But we merely slept and woke again to find that we had passed through all that country which he was eight days in sailing through. He must have had a troubled sleep. We were not long enough on the river to realize that it had length; we got only the impression of its breadth, as if we had passed over a lake a mile or two in breadth and several miles long, though we might thus have slept through a European kingdom. Being at the head of Lake St. Peter, on the above-mentioned 28th of September, dealing with the natives, Cartier says: "We inquired of them by signs if this was the route to Hochelaga [Montreal]; and they answered that it was, and that there were yet three days' journeys to go there." He finally arrived at Hochelaga on the 2d of October.

When I went on deck at dawn we had already passed through Lake St. Peter, and saw islands ahead of us. Our boat advancing with a strong and steady pulse over the calm surface, we felt as if we were permitted to be awake in the scenery of a dream. Many vivacious Lombardy poplars along the distant shores gave them a novel and lively, though artificial, look, and contrasted strangely with the slender and graceful elms on both shores and islands. The church of Varennes, fifteen

miles from Montreal, was conspicuous at a great distance before us, appearing to belong to, and rise out of, the river; and now, and before, Mount Royal indicated where the city was. We arrived about seven o'clock, and set forth immediately to ascend the mountain, two miles distant, going across lots in spite of numerous signs threatening the severest penalties to trespassers, past an old building known as the MacTavish property, — Simon MacTavish, I suppose, whom Silliman refers to as “in a sense the founder of the Northwestern Company.” His tomb was behind in the woods, with a remarkably high wall and higher monument. The family returned to Europe. He could not have imagined how dead he would be in a few years, and all the more dead and forgotten for being buried under such a mass of gloomy stone, where not even memory could get at him without a crowbar. Ah! poor man, with that last end of his! However, he may have been the worthiest of mortals for aught that I know. From the mountaintop we got a view of the whole city; the flat, fertile, extensive island; the noble sea of the St. Lawrence swelling into lakes; the mountains about St. Hyacinthe, and in Vermont and New York; and the mouth of the Ottawa in the west, overlooking that St. Anne’s where the voyageur sings his “parting hymn,” and bids adieu to civilization, — a name, thanks to Moore’s verses, the most suggestive of poetic associations of any in Canada. We, too, climbed the hill which Cartier, first of white men, ascended, and named Mont-real (the 3d of October, O. S., 1535), and, like him, “we saw the said river as far as we could see, *grand, large, et spacieux*, going to

the southwest," toward that land whither Donnacona had told the discoverer that he had been a month's journey from Canada, where there grew "*force Canelle et Girofle*," much cinnamon and cloves, and where also, as the natives told him, were three great lakes and afterward *une mer douce*, — a sweet sea, — *de laquelle n'est mention avoir vu le bout*, of which there is no mention to have seen the end. But instead of an Indian town far in the interior of a new world, with guides to show us where the river came from, we found a splendid and bustling stone-built city of white men, and only a few squalid Indians offered to sell us baskets at the Lachine Railroad Depot, and Hochelaga is, perchance, but the fancy name of an engine company or an eating-house.

We left Montreal Wednesday, the 2d of October, late in the afternoon. In the La Prairie cars the Yankees made themselves merry, imitating the cries of the charette-drivers to perfection, greatly to the amusement of some French-Canadian travelers, and they kept it up all the way to Boston. I saw one person on board the boat at St. Johns, and one or two more elsewhere in Canada, wearing homespun gray greatcoats, or capotes, with conical and comical hoods, which fell back between their shoulders like small bags, ready to be turned up over the head when occasion required, though a hat usurped that place now. They looked as if they would be convenient and proper enough as long as the coats were new and tidy, but would soon come to have a beggarly and unsightly look, akin to rags and dust-holes. We reached Burlington early in the morning, where the Yankees tried to pass off their Canada coppers, but the

newsboys knew better. Returning through the Green Mountains, I was reminded that I had not seen in Canada such brilliant autumnal tints as I had previously seen in Vermont. Perhaps there was not yet so great and sudden a contrast with the summer heats in the former country as in these mountain valleys. As we were passing through Ashburnham, by a new white house which stood at some distance in a field, one passenger exclaimed, so that all in the car could hear him, "There, there's not so good a house as that in all Canada!" I did not much wonder at his remark, for there is a neatness, as well as evident prosperity, a certain elastic easiness of circumstances, so to speak, when not rich, about a New England house, as if the proprietor could at least afford to make repairs in the spring, which the Canadian houses do not suggest. Though of stone, they are no better constructed than a stone barn would be with us; the only building, except the *château*, on which money and taste are expended, being the church. In Canada an ordinary New England house would be mistaken for the *château*, and while every village here contains at least several gentlemen or "squires," *there* there is but one to a *seigniory*.

I got home this Thursday evening, having spent just one week in Canada and traveled eleven hundred miles. The whole expense of this journey, including two guide-books and a map, which cost one dollar twelve and a half cents, was twelve dollars seventy-five cents. I do not suppose that I have seen all British America; that could not be done by a cheap excursion, unless it were a cheap excursion to the Icy Sea, as seen by Hearne or

Mackenzie, and then, no doubt, some interesting features would be omitted. I wished to go a little way behind the word *Canadense*, of which naturalists make such frequent use; and I should like still right well to make a longer excursion on foot through the wilder parts of Canada, which perhaps might be called *Iter Canadense*.

NATURAL HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS¹

BOOKS of natural history make the most cheerful winter reading. I read in Audubon with a thrill of delight, when the snow covers the ground, of the magnolia, and the Florida keys, and their warm sea-breezes; of the fence-rail, and the cotton-tree, and the migrations of the rice-bird; of the breaking up of winter in Labrador, and the melting of the snow on the forks of the Missouri; and owe an accession of health to these reminiscences of luxuriant nature.

Within the circuit of this plodding life,
There enter moments of an azure hue,
Untarnished fair as is the violet
Or anemone, when the spring strews them
By some meandering rivulet, which make
The best philosophy untrue that aims
But to console man for his grievances.
I have remembered, when the winter came,
High in my chamber in the frosty nights,
When in the still light of the cheerful moon,
On every twig and rail and jutting spout,
The icy spears were adding to their length
Against the arrows of the coming sun,
How in the shimmering noon of summer past
Some unrecorded beam slanted across
The upland pastures where the Johnswort grew;
Or heard, amid the verdure of my mind,

¹ Reports — on the Fishes, Reptiles, and Birds; the Herbaceous Plants and Quadrapeds; the Insects Injurious to Vegetation; and the Invertebrate Animals of Massachusetts. Published agreeably to an Order of the Legislature, by the Commissioners on the Zoölogical and Botanical Survey of the State.

The bee's long smothered hum, on the blue flag
Loitering amidst the mead; or busy rill,
Which now through all its course stands still and dumb,
Its own memorial, — purling at its play
Along the slopes, and through the meadows next,
Until its youthful sound was hushed at last
In the staid current of the lowland stream;
Or seen the furrows shine but late upturned,
And where the fieldfare followed in the rear,
When all the fields around lay bound and hoar
Beneath a thick integument of snow.
So by God's cheap economy made rich
To go upon my winter's task again.

I am singularly refreshed in winter when I hear of service-berries, poke-weed, juniper. Is not heaven made up of these cheap summer glories? There is a singular health in those words, Labrador and East Main, which no desponding creed recognizes. How much more than Federal are these States! If there were no other vicissitudes than the seasons, our interest would never tire. Much more is adoin'g than Congress wots of. What journal do the persimmon and the buckeye keep, and the sharp-shinned hawk? What is transpiring from summer to winter in the Carolinas, and the Great Pine Forest, and the Valley of the Mohawk? The merely political aspect of the land is never very cheering; men are degraded when considered as the members of a political organization. On this side all lands present only the symptoms of decay. I see but Bunker Hill and Sing-Sing, the District of Columbia and Sullivan's Island, with a few avenues connecting them. But paltry are they all beside one blast of the east or the south wind which blows over them.

In society you will not find health, but in nature. Unless our feet at least stood in the midst of nature, all our faces would be pale and livid. Society is always diseased, and the best is the most so. There is no scent in it so wholesome as that of the pines, nor any fragrance so penetrating and restorative as the life-everlasting in high pastures. I would keep some book of natural history always by me as a sort of elixir, the reading of which should restore the tone of the system. To the sick, indeed, nature is sick, but to the well, a fountain of health. To him who contemplates a trait of natural beauty no harm nor disappointment can come. The doctrines of despair, of spiritual or political tyranny or servitude, were never taught by such as shared the serenity of nature. Surely good courage will not flag here on the Atlantic border, as long as we are flanked by the Fur Countries. There is enough in that sound to cheer one under any circumstances. The spruce, the hemlock, and the pine will not countenance despair. Methinks some creeds in vestries and churches do forget the hunter wrapped in furs by the Great Slave Lake, and that the Esquimaux sledges are drawn by dogs, and in the twilight of the northern night the hunter does not give over to follow the seal and walrus on the ice. They are of sick and diseased imaginations who would toll the world's knell so soon. Cannot these sedentary sects do better than prepare the shrouds and write the epitaphs of those other busy living men? The practical faith of all men belies the preacher's consolation. What is any man's discourse to me, if I am not sensible of something in it as steady and cheery as the creak of crickets? In it

the woods must be relieved against the sky. Men tire me when I am not constantly greeted and refreshed as by the flux of sparkling streams. Surely joy is the condition of life. Think of the young fry that leap in ponds, the myriads of insects ushered into being on a summer evening, the incessant note of the hyla with which the woods ring in the spring, the nonchalance of the butterfly carrying accident and change painted in a thousand hues upon its wings, or the brook minnow stoutly stemming the current, the lustre of whose scales, worn bright by the attrition, is reflected upon the bank!

We fancy that this din of religion, literature, and philosophy, which is heard in pulpits, lyceums, and parlors, vibrates through the universe, and is as catholic a sound as the creaking of the earth's axle; but if a man sleep soundly, he will forget it all between sunset and dawn. It is the three-inch swing of a pendulum in a cupboard, which the great pulse of nature vibrates by and through each instant. When we lift our eyelids and open our ears, it disappears with smoke and rattle like the cars on a railroad. When I detect a beauty in any of the recesses of nature, I am reminded, by the serene and retired spirit in which it requires to be contemplated, of the inexpressible privacy of a life, — how silent and unambitious it is. The beauty there is in mosses must be considered from the holiest, quietest nook. What an admirable training is science for the more active warfare of life! Indeed, the unchallenged bravery which these studies imply, is far more impressive than the trumpeted valor of the warrior. I am pleased to learn that Thales was up and stirring by night

not unfrequently, as his astronomical discoveries prove. Linnæus, setting out for Lapland, surveys his "comb" and "spare shirt," "leathern breeches" and "gauze cap to keep off gnats," with as much complacency as Bonaparte a park of artillery for the Russian campaign. The quiet bravery of the man is admirable. His eye is to take in fish, flower, and bird, quadruped and biped. Science is always brave; for to know is to know good; doubt and danger quail before her eye. What the coward overlooks in his hurry, she calmly scrutinizes, breaking ground like a pioneer for the array of arts that follow in her train. But cowardice is unscientific; for there cannot be a science of ignorance. There may be a science of bravery, for that advances; but a retreat is rarely well conducted; if it is, then is it an orderly advance in the face of circumstances.

But to draw a little nearer to our promised topics. Entomology extends the limits of being in a new direction, so that I walk in nature with a sense of greater space and freedom. It suggests besides, that the universe is not rough-hewn, but perfect in its details. Nature will bear the closest inspection; she invites us to lay our eye level with the smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain. She has no interstices; every part is full of life. I explore, too, with pleasure, the sources of the myriad sounds which crowd the summer noon, and which seem the very grain and stuff of which eternity is made. Who does not remember the shrill roll-call of the harvest-fly? There were ears for these sounds in Greece long ago, as Anacreon's ode will show.

"We pronounce thee happy, Cicada,
For on the tops of the trees,
Drinking a little dew,
Like any king thou singest,
For thine are they all,
Whatever thou seest in the fields,
And whatever the woods bear.
Thou art the friend of the husbandmen,
In no respect injuring any one;
And thou art honored among men,
Sweet prophet of summer.
The Muses love thee,
And Phœbus himself loves thee,
And has given thee a shrill song;
Age does not wrack thee,
Thou skillful, earthborn, song-loving,
Unsuffering, bloodless one;
Almost thou art like the gods."

In the autumn days, the creaking of crickets is heard at noon over all the land, and as in summer they are heard chiefly at nightfall, so then by their incessant chirp they usher in the evening of the year. Nor can all the vanities that vex the world alter one whit the measure that night has chosen. Every pulse-beat is in exact time with the cricket's chant and the tickings of the death-watch in the wall. Alternate with these if you can.

About two hundred and eighty birds either reside permanently in the State, or spend the summer only, or make us a passing visit. Those which spend the winter with us have obtained our warmest sympathy. The nut-hatch and chickadee flitting in company through the dells of the wood, the one harshly scolding at the intruder, the other with a faint lisping note enticing him on; the jay screaming in the orchard; the crow cawing

in unison with the storm; the partridge, like a russet link extended over from autumn to spring, preserving unbroken the chain of summers; the hawk with warrior-like firmness abiding the blasts of winter; the robin¹ and lark lurking by warm springs in the woods; the familiar snowbird culling a few seeds in the garden or a few crumbs in the yard; and occasionally the shrike, with heedless and unfrozen melody bringing back summer again: —

His steady sails he never furls
At any time o' year,
And perching now on Winter's curls,
He whistles in his ear.

As the spring advances, and the ice is melting in the river, our earliest and straggling visitors make their appearance. Again does the old Teian poet sing as well for New England as for Greece, in the

RETURN OF SPRING

Behold, how, Spring appearing,
The Graces send forth roses;
Behold, how the wave of the sea
Is made smooth by the calm;
Behold, how the duck dives;
Behold, how the crane travels;

¹ A white robin and a white quail have occasionally been seen. It is mentioned in Audubon as remarkable that the nest of a robin should be found on the ground; but this bird seems to be less particular than most in the choice of a building-spot. I have seen its nest placed under the thatched roof of a deserted barn, and in one instance, where the adjacent country was nearly destitute of trees, together with two of the phœbe, upon the end of a board in the loft of a sawmill, but a few feet from the saw, which vibrated several inches with the motion of the machinery.

And Titan shines constantly bright.
The shadows of the clouds are moving;
The works of man shine;
The earth puts forth fruits;
The fruit of the olive puts forth.
The cup of Bacchus is crowned,
Along the leaves, along the branches,
The fruit, bending them down, flourishes.

The ducks alight at this season in the still water, in company with the gulls, which do not fail to improve an east wind to visit our meadows, and swim about by twos and threes, pluming themselves, and diving to peck at the root of the lily, and the cranberries which the frost has not loosened. The first flock of geese is seen beating to north, in long harrows and waving lines; the jingle of the song sparrow salutes us from the shrubs and fences; the plaintive note of the lark comes clear and sweet from the meadow; and the bluebird, like an azure ray, glances past us in our walk. The fish hawk, too, is occasionally seen at this season sailing majestically over the water, and he who has once observed it will not soon forget the majesty of its flight. It sails the air like a ship of the line, worthy to struggle with the elements, falling back from time to time like a ship on its beam ends, and holding its talons up as if ready for the arrows, in the attitude of the national bird. It is a great presence, as of the master of river and forest. Its eye would not quail before the owner of the soil, but make him feel like an intruder on its domains. And then its retreat, sailing so steadily away, is a kind of advance. I have by me one of a pair of ospreys, which have for some years fished in this vicinity, shot by a neighboring pond,

measuring more than two feet in length, and six in the stretch of its wings. Nuttall mentions that "the ancients, particularly Aristotle, pretended that the ospreys taught their young to gaze at the sun, and those who were unable to do so were destroyed. Linnæus even believed, on ancient authority, that one of the feet of this bird had all the toes divided, while the other was partly webbed, so that it could swim with one foot, and grasp a fish with the other." But that educated eye is now dim, and those talons are nerveless. Its shrill scream seems yet to linger in its throat, and the roar of the sea in its wings. There is the tyranny of Jove in its claws, and his wrath in the erectile feathers of the head and neck. It reminds me of the Argonautic expedition, and would inspire the dullest to take flight over Parnassus.

The booming of the bittern, described by Goldsmith and Nuttall, is frequently heard in our fens, in the morning and evening, sounding like a pump, or the chopping of wood in a frosty morning in some distant farm-yard. The manner in which this sound is produced I have not seen anywhere described. On one occasion, the bird has been seen by one of my neighbors to thrust its bill into the water, and suck up as much as it could hold, then, raising its head, it pumped it out again with four or five heaves of the neck, throwing it two or three feet, and making the sound each time.

At length the summer's eternity is ushered in by the cackle of the flicker among the oaks on the hillside, and a new dynasty begins with calm security.

In May and June the woodland quire is in full tune. and, given the immense spaces of hollow air, and this

curious human ear, one does not see how the void could be better filled.

Each summer sound
Is a summer round.

As the season advances, and those birds which make us but a passing visit depart, the woods become silent again, and but few feathers ruffle the drowsy air. But the solitary rambler may still find a response and expression for every mood in the depths of the wood.

Sometimes I hear the veery's ¹ clarion,
Or brazen trump of the impatient jay,
And in secluded woods the chickadee
Doles out her scanty notes, which sing the praise
Of heroes, and set forth the loveliness
Of virtue evermore.

The phoebe still sings in harmony with the sultry weather by the brink of the pond, nor are the desultory hours of noon in the midst of the village without their minstrel.

Upon the lofty elm-tree sprays
The vireo rings the changes sweet,
During the trivial summer days,
Striving to lift our thoughts above the street.

With the autumn begins in some measure a new spring. The plover is heard whistling high in the air over the dry pastures, the finches flit from tree to tree,

¹ This bird, which is so well described by Nuttall, but is apparently unknown by the author of the Report, is one of the most common in the woods in this vicinity, and in Cambridge I have heard the college yard ring with its trill. The boys call it "yorrick," from the sound of its querulous and chiding note, as it flits near the traveler through the underwood. The cowbird's egg is occasionally found in its nest, as mentioned by Audubon.

the bobolinks and flickers fly in flocks, and the goldfinch rides on the earliest blast, like a winged hyla peeping amid the rustle of the leaves. The crows, too, begin now to congregate; you may stand and count them as they fly low and straggling over the landscape, singly or by twos and threes, at intervals of half a mile, until a hundred have passed.

I have seen it suggested somewhere that the crow was brought to this country by the white man; but I shall as soon believe that the white man planted these pines and hemlocks. He is no spaniel to follow our steps; but rather flits about the clearings like the dusky spirit of the Indian, reminding me oftener of Philip and Powhatan than of Winthrop and Smith. He is a relic of the dark ages. By just so slight, by just so lasting a tenure does superstition hold the world ever; there is the rook in England, and the crow in New England.

Thou dusky spirit of the wood,
Bird of an ancient brood,
Flitting thy lonely way,
A meteor in the summer's day,
From wood to wood, from hill to hill,
Low over forest, field, and rill,
What wouldst thou say?
Why shouldst thou haunt the day?
What makes thy melancholy float?
What bravery inspires thy throat,
And bears thee up above the clouds,
Over desponding human crowds,
Which far below
Lay thy haunts low?

The late walker or sailor, in the October evenings, may hear the murmurings of the snipe, circling over

the meadows, the most spirit-like sound in nature; and still later in the autumn, when the frosts have tinged the leaves, a solitary loon pays a visit to our retired ponds, where he may lurk undisturbed till the season of moulting is passed, making the woods ring with his wild laughter. This bird, the Great Northern Diver, well deserves its name; for when pursued with a boat, it will dive, and swim like a fish under water, for sixty rods or more, as fast as a boat can be paddled, and its pursuer, if he would discover his game again, must put his ear to the surface to hear where it comes up. When it comes to the surface, it throws the water off with one shake of its wings, and calmly swims about until again disturbed.

These are the sights and sounds which reach our senses oftenest during the year. But sometimes one hears a quite new note, which has for background other Carolinas and Mexicos than the books describe, and learns that his ornithology has done him no service.

It appears from the Report that there are about forty quadrupeds belonging to the State, and among these one is glad to hear of a few bears, wolves, lynxes, and wildcats.

When our river overflows its banks in the spring, the wind from the meadows is laden with a strong scent of musk, and by its freshness advertises me of an unexplored wildness. Those backwoods are not far off then. I am affected by the sight of the cabins of the muskrat, made of mud and grass, and raised three or four feet along the river, as when I read of the barrows of Asia. The muskrat is the beaver of the settled States. Their

number has even increased within a few years in this vicinity. Among the rivers which empty into the Merrimack, the Concord is known to the boatmen as a dead stream. The Indians are said to have called it Musketaquid, or Prairie River. Its current being much more sluggish and its water more muddy than the rest, it abounds more in fish and game of every kind. According to the History of the town, "The fur-trade was here once very important. As early as 1641, a company was formed in the colony, of which Major Willard of Concord was superintendent, and had the exclusive right to trade with the Indians in furs and other articles; and for this right they were obliged to pay into the public treasury one twentieth of all the furs they obtained." There are trappers in our midst still, as well as on the streams of the far West, who night and morning go the round of their traps, without fear of the Indian. One of these takes from one hundred and fifty to two hundred muskrats in a year, and even thirty-six have been shot by one man in a day. Their fur, which is not nearly as valuable as formerly, is in good condition in the winter and spring only; and upon the breaking up of the ice, when they are driven out of their holes by the water, the greatest number is shot from boats, either swimming or resting on their stools, or slight supports of grass and reeds, by the side of the stream. Though they exhibit considerable cunning at other times, they are easily taken in a trap, which has only to be placed in their holes, or wherever they frequent, without any bait being used, though it is sometimes rubbed with their musk. In the winter the hunter cuts holes in the ice,

and shoots them when they come to the surface. Their burrows are usually in the high banks of the river, with the entrance under water, and rising within to above the level of high water. Sometimes their nests, composed of dried meadow-grass and flags, may be discovered where the bank is low and spongy, by the yielding of the ground under the feet. They have from three to seven or eight young in the spring.

Frequently, in the morning or evening, a long ripple is seen in the still water, where a muskrat is crossing the stream, with only its nose above the surface, and sometimes a green bough in its mouth to build its house with. When it finds itself observed, it will dive and swim five or six rods under water, and at length conceal itself in its hole, or the weeds. It will remain under water for ten minutes at a time, and on one occasion has been seen, when undisturbed, to form an air-bubble under the ice, which contracted and expanded as it breathed at leisure. When it suspects danger on shore, it will stand erect like a squirrel, and survey its neighborhood for several minutes, without moving.

In the fall, if a meadow intervene between their burrows and the stream, they erect cabins of mud and grass, three or four feet high, near its edge. These are not their breeding-places, though young are sometimes found in them in late freshets, but rather their hunting-lodges, to which they resort in the winter with their food, and for shelter. Their food consists chiefly of flags and fresh-water mussels, the shells of the latter being left in large quantities around their lodges in the spring.

The Penobscot Indian wears the entire skin of a musk-

rat, with the legs and tail dangling, and the head caught under his girdle, for a pouch, into which he puts his fishing-tackle, and essences to scent his traps with.

The bear, wolf, lynx, wildcat, deer, beaver, and marten have disappeared; the otter is rarely if ever seen here at present; and the mink is less common than formerly.

Perhaps of all our untamed quadrupeds, the fox has obtained the widest and most familiar reputation, from the time of Pilpay and Æsop to the present day. His recent tracks still give variety to a winter's walk. I tread in the steps of the fox that has gone before me by some hours, or which perhaps I have started, with such a tip-toe of expectation as if I were on the trail of the Spirit itself which resides in the wood, and expected soon to catch it in its lair. I am curious to know what has determined its graceful curvatures, and how surely they were coincident with the fluctuations of some mind. I know which way a mind wended, what horizon it faced, by the setting of these tracks, and whether it moved slowly or rapidly, by their greater or less intervals and distinctness; for the swiftest step leaves yet a lasting trace. Sometimes you will see the trails of many together, and where they have gamboled and gone through a hundred evolutions, which testify to a singular listlessness and leisure in nature.

When I see a fox run across the pond on the snow, with the carelessness of freedom, or at intervals trace his course in the sunshine along the ridge of a hill, I give up to him sun and earth as to their true proprietor. He does not go in the sun, but it seems to follow him, and there is a visible sympathy between him and it.

Sometimes, when the snow lies light and but five or six inches deep, you may give chase and come up with one on foot. In such a case he will show a remarkable presence of mind, choosing only the safest direction, though he may lose ground by it. Notwithstanding his fright, he will take no step which is not beautiful. His pace is a sort of leopard canter, as if he were in no wise impeded by the snow, but were husbanding his strength all the while. When the ground is uneven, the course is a series of graceful curves, conforming to the shape of the surface. He runs as though there were not a bone in his back. Occasionally dropping his muzzle to the ground for a rod or two, and then tossing his head aloft, when satisfied of his course. When he comes to a declivity, he will put his fore feet together, and slide swiftly down it, shoving the snow before him. He treads so softly that you would hardly hear it from any nearness, and yet with such expression that it would not be quite inaudible at any distance.

Of fishes, seventy-five genera and one hundred and seven species are described in the Report. The fisherman will be startled to learn that there are but about a dozen kinds in the ponds and streams of any inland town; and almost nothing is known of their habits. Only their names and residence make one love fishes. I would know even the number of their fin-rays, and how many scales compose the lateral line. I am the wiser in respect to all knowledges, and the better qualified for all fortunes, for knowing that there is a minnow in the brook. Methinks I have need even of his sympathy, and to be his fellow in a degree.

I have experienced such simple delight in the trivial matters of fishing and sporting, formerly, as might have inspired the muse of Homer or Shakespeare; and now, when I turn the pages and ponder the plates of the Angler's Souvenir, I am fain to exclaim, —

“Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud?”

Next to nature, it seems as if man's actions were the most natural, they so gently accord with her. The small seines of flax stretched across the shallow and transparent parts of our river are no more intrusion than the cobweb in the sun. I stay my boat in mid-current, and look down in the sunny water to see the civil meshes of his nets, and wonder how the blustering people of the town could have done this elvish work. The twine looks like a new river-weed, and is to the river as a beautiful memento of man's presence in nature, discovered as silently and delicately as a footprint in the sand.

When the ice is covered with snow, I do not suspect the wealth under my feet; that there is as good as a mine under me wherever I go. How many pickerel are poised on easy fin fathoms below the loaded wain! The revolution of the seasons must be a curious phenomenon to them. At length the sun and wind brush aside their curtain, and they see the heavens again.

Early in the spring, after the ice has melted, is the time for spearing fish. Suddenly the wind shifts from north-east and east to west and south, and every icicle, which has tinkled on the meadow grass so long, trickles down its stem, and seeks its level unerringly with a million comrades. The steam curls up from every roof and fence.

I see the civil sun drying earth's tears,
Her tears of joy, which only faster flow.

In the brooks is heard the slight grating sound of small cakes of ice, floating with various speed, full of content and promise, and where the water gurgles under a natural bridge, you may hear these hasty rafts hold conversation in an undertone. Every rill is a channel for the juices of the meadow. In the ponds the ice cracks with a merry and inspiriting din, and down the larger streams is whirled grating hoarsely, and crashing its way along, which was so lately a highway for the woodman's team and the fox, sometimes with the tracks of the skaters still fresh upon it, and the holes cut for pickerel. Town committees anxiously inspect the bridges and causeways, as if by mere eye-force to intercede with the ice and save the treasury.

The river swelleth more and more,
Like some sweet influence stealing o'er
The passive town; and for a while
Each tussock makes a tiny isle,
Where, on some friendly Ararat,
Resteth the weary water-rat.

No ripple shows Musketaquid,
Her very current e'en is hid,
As deepest souls do calmest rest
When thoughts are swelling in the breast,
And she that in the summer's drought
Doth make a rippling and a rout,
Sleeps from Nahshawtuck to the Cliff,
Unruffled by a single skiff.
But by a thousand distant hills
The louder roar a thousand rills,

And many a spring which now is dumb,
And many a stream with smothered hum,
Doth swifter well and faster glide,
Though buried deep beneath the tide.
Our village shows a rural Venice,
Its broad lagoons where yonder fen is;
As lovely as the Bay of Naples
Yon placid cove amid the maples;
And in my neighbor's field of corn
I recognize the Golden Horn.

Here Nature taught from year to year,
When only red men came to hear, —
Methinks 't was in this school of art
Venice and Naples learned their part;
But still their mistress, to my mind,
Her young disciples leaves behind.

The fisherman now repairs and launches his boat. The best time for spearing is at this season, before the weeds have begun to grow, and while the fishes lie in the shallow water, for in summer they prefer the cool depths, and in the autumn they are still more or less concealed by the grass. The first requisite is fuel for your crate; and for this purpose the roots of the pitch pine are commonly used, found under decayed stumps, where the trees have been felled eight or ten years.

With a crate, or jack, made of iron hoops, to contain your fire, and attached to the bow of your boat about three feet from the water, a fish-spear with seven tines and fourteen feet long, a large basket or barrow to carry your fuel and bring back your fish, and a thick outer garment, you are equipped for a cruise. It should be a warm and still evening; and then, with a fire crackling merrily at the prow, you may launch forth like a cucullo

into the night. The dullest soul cannot go upon such an expedition without some of the spirit of adventure; as if he had stolen the boat of Charon and gone down the Styx on a midnight expedition into the realms of Pluto. And much speculation does this wandering star afford to the musing night-walker, leading him on and on, jack-o'-lantern-like, over the meadows; or, if he is wiser, he amuses himself with imagining what of human life, far in the silent night, is flitting moth-like round its candle. The silent navigator shoves his craft gently over the water, with a smothered pride and sense of benefaction, as if he were the phosphor, or light-bringer, to these dusky realms, or some sister moon, blessing the spaces with her light. The waters, for a rod or two on either hand and several feet in depth, are lit up with more than noonday distinctness, and he enjoys the opportunity which so many have desired, for the roofs of a city are indeed raised, and he surveys the midnight economy of the fishes. There they lie in every variety of posture; some on their backs, with their white bellies uppermost, some suspended in mid-water, some sculling gently along with a dreamy motion of the fins, and others quite active and wide awake, — a scene not unlike what the human city would present. Occasionally he will encounter a turtle selecting the choicest morsels, or a muskrat resting on a tussock. He may exercise his dexterity, if he sees fit, on the more distant and active fish, or fork the nearer into his boat, as potatoes out of a pot, or even take the sound sleepers with his hands. But these last accomplishments he will soon learn to dispense with, distinguishing the real object of his pursuit, and find

compensation in the beauty and never-ending novelty of his position. The pines growing down to the water's edge will show newly as in the glare of a conflagration; and as he floats under the willows with his light, the song sparrow will often wake on her perch, and sing that strain at midnight which she had meditated for the morning. And when he has done, he may have to steer his way home through the dark by the north star, and he will feel himself some degrees nearer to it for having lost his way on the earth.

The fishes commonly taken in this way are pickerel, suckers, perch, eels, pouts, breams, and shiners, — from thirty to sixty weight in a night. Some are hard to be recognized in the unnatural light, especially the perch, which, his dark bands being exaggerated, acquires a ferocious aspect. The number of these transverse bands, which the Report states to be seven, is, however, very variable, for in some of our ponds they have nine and ten even.

It appears that we have eight kinds of tortoises, twelve snakes, — but one of which is venomous, — nine frogs and toads, nine salamanders, and one lizard, for our neighbors.

I am particularly attracted by the motions of the serpent tribe. They make our hands and feet, the wings of the bird, and the fins of the fish seem very superfluous, as if Nature had only indulged her fancy in making them. The black snake will dart into a bush when pursued, and circle round and round with an easy and graceful motion, amid the thin and bare twigs, five or six feet from the ground, as a bird flits from bough to bough,

or hang in festoons between the forks. Elasticity and flexibleness in the simpler forms of animal life are equivalent to a complex system of limbs in the higher; and we have only to be as wise and wily as the serpent, to perform as difficult feats without the vulgar assistance of hands and feet.

In May, the snapping turtle (*Emysaurus serpentina*) is frequently taken on the meadows and in the river. The fisherman, taking sight over the calm surface, discovers its snout projecting above the water, at the distance of many rods, and easily secures his prey through its unwillingness to disturb the water by swimming hastily away, for, gradually drawing its head under, it remains resting on some limb or clump of grass. Its eggs, which are buried at a distance from the water, in some soft place, as a pigeon-bed, are frequently devoured by the skunk. It will catch fish by daylight, as a toad catches flies, and is said to emit a transparent fluid from its mouth to attract them.

Nature has taken more care than the fondest parent for the education and refinement of her children. Consider the silent influence which flowers exert, no less upon the ditcher in the meadow than the lady in the bower. When I walk in the woods, I am reminded that a wise purveyor has been there before me; my most delicate experience is typified there. I am struck with the pleasing friendships and unanimities of nature, as when the lichen on the trees takes the form of their leaves. In the most stupendous scenes you will see delicate and fragile features, as slight wreaths of vapor, dew-lines, feathery sprays, which suggest a high refine-

ment, a noble blood and breeding, as it were. It is not hard to account for elves and fairies; they represent this light grace, this ethereal gentility. Bring a spray from the wood, or a crystal from the brook, and place it on your mantel, and your household ornaments will seem plebeian beside its nobler fashion and bearing. It will wave superior there, as if used to a more refined and polished circle. It has a salute and a response to all your enthusiasm and heroism.

In the winter, I stop short in the path to admire how the trees grow up without forethought, regardless of the time and circumstances. They do not wait as man does, but now is the golden age of the sapling. Earth, air, sun, and rain are occasion enough; they were no better in primeval centuries. The "winter of *their* discontent" never comes. Witness the buds of the native poplar standing gayly out to the frost on the sides of its bare switches. They express a naked confidence. With cheerful heart one could be a sojourner in the wilderness, if he were sure to find there the catkins of the willow or the alder. When I read of them in the accounts of northern adventurers, by Baffin's Bay or Mackenzie's River, I see how even there, too, I could dwell. They are our little vegetable redeemers. Methinks our virtue will hold out till they come again. They are worthy to have had a greater than Minerva or Ceres for their inventor. Who was the benignant goddess that bestowed them on mankind?

Nature is mythical and mystical always, and works with the license and extravagance of genius. She has her luxurious and florid style as well as art. Having a pil-

grim's cup to make, she gives to the whole — stem, bowl, handle, and nose — some fantastic shape, as if it were to be the car of some fabulous marine deity, a Nereus or Triton.

In the winter, the botanist need not confine himself to his books and herbarium, and give over his outdoor pursuits, but may study a new department of vegetable physiology, what may be called crystalline botany, then. The winter of 1837 was unusually favorable for this. In December of that year, the Genius of vegetation seemed to hover by night over its summer haunts with unusual persistency. Such a hoar-frost as is very uncommon here or anywhere, and whose full effects can never be witnessed after sunrise, occurred several times. As I went forth early on a still and frosty morning, the trees looked like airy creatures of darkness caught napping; on this side huddled together, with their gray hairs streaming, in a secluded valley which the sun had not penetrated; on that, hurrying off in Indian file along some watercourse, while the shrubs and grasses, like elves and fairies of the night, sought to hide their diminished heads in the snow. The river, viewed from the high bank, appeared of a yellowish-green color, though all the landscape was white. Every tree, shrub, and spire of grass, that could raise its head above the snow, was covered with a dense ice-foliage, answering, as it were, leaf for leaf to its summer dress. Even the fences had put forth leaves in the night. The centre, diverging, and more minute fibres were perfectly distinct, and the edges regularly indented. These leaves were on the side of the twig or stubble opposite to the sun, meeting it for the

most part at right angles, and there were others standing out at all possible angles upon these and upon one another, with no twig or stubble supporting them. When the first rays of the sun slanted over the scene, the grasses seemed hung with innumerable jewels, which jingled merrily as they were brushed by the foot of the traveler, and reflected all the hues of the rainbow, as he moved from side to side. It struck me that these ghost leaves, and the green ones whose forms they assume, were the creatures of but one law; that in obedience to the same law the vegetable juices swell gradually into the perfect leaf, on the one hand, and the crystalline particles troop to their standard in the same order, on the other. As if the material were indifferent, but the law one and invariable, and every plant in the spring but pushed up into and filled a permanent and eternal mould, which, summer and winter forever, is waiting to be filled.

This foliate structure is common to the coral and the plumage of birds, and to how large a part of animate and inanimate nature. The same independence of law on matter is observable in many other instances, as in the natural rhymes, when some animal form, color, or odor has its counterpart in some vegetable. As, indeed, all rhymes imply an eternal melody, independent of any particular sense.

As confirmation of the fact that vegetation is but a kind of crystallization, every one may observe how, upon the edge of the melting frost on the window, the needle-shaped particles are bundled together so as to resemble fields waving with grain, or shocks rising here and there from the stubble; on one side the vegetation

of the torrid zone, high-towering palms and wide-spread banyans, such as are seen in pictures of oriental scenery; on the other, arctic pines stiff frozen, with downcast branches.

Vegetation has been made the type of all growth; but as in crystals the law is more obvious, their material being more simple, and for the most part more transient and fleeting, would it not be as philosophical as convenient to consider all growth, all filling up within the limits of nature, but a crystallization more or less rapid?

On this occasion, in the side of the high bank of the river, wherever the water or other cause had formed a cavity, its throat and outer edge, like the entrance to a citadel, bristled with a glistening ice-armor. In one place you might see minute ostrich-feathers, which seemed the waving plumes of the warriors filing into the fortress; in another, the glancing, fan-shaped banners of the Lilliputian host; and in another, the needle-shaped particles collected into bundles, resembling the plumes of the pine, might pass for a phalanx of spears. From the under side of the ice in the brooks, where there was a thicker ice below, depended a mass of crystallization, four or five inches deep, in the form of prisms, with their lower ends open, which, when the ice was laid on its smooth side, resembled the roofs and steeples of a Gothic city, or the vessels of a crowded haven under a press of canvas. The very mud in the road, where the ice had melted, was crystallized with deep rectilinear fissures, and the crystalline masses in the sides of the ruts resembled exactly asbestos in the disposition of their needles. Around the roots of the stubble and flower-stalks, the

frost was gathered into the form of irregular conical shells, or fairy rings. In some places the ice-crystals were lying upon granite rocks, directly over crystals of quartz, the frostwork of a longer night, crystals of a longer period, but, to some eye unprejudiced by the short term of human life, melting as fast as the former.

In the Report on the Invertebrate Animals, this singular fact is recorded, which teaches us to put a new value on time and space: "The distribution of the marine shells is well worthy of notice as a geological fact. Cape Cod, the right arm of the Commonwealth, reaches out into the ocean, some fifty or sixty miles. It is nowhere many miles wide; but this narrow point of land has hitherto proved a barrier to the migrations of many species of Mollusca. Several genera and numerous species, which are separated by the intervention of only a few miles of land, are effectually prevented from mingling by the Cape, and do not pass from one side to the other. . . . Of the one hundred and ninety-seven marine species, eighty-three do not pass to the south shore, and fifty are not found on the north shore of the Cape."

That common mussel, the *Unio complanatus*, or more properly *fluvialis*, left in the spring by the muskrat upon rocks and stumps, appears to have been an important article of food with the Indians. In one place, where they are said to have feasted, they are found in large quantities, at an elevation of thirty feet above the river, filling the soil to the depth of a foot, and mingled with ashes and Indian remains.

The works we have placed at the head of our chapter, with as much license as the preacher selects his text, are

such as imply more labor than enthusiasm. The State wanted complete catalogues of its natural riches, with such additional facts merely as would be directly useful.

The reports on Fishes, Reptiles, Insects, and Invertebrate Animals, however, indicate labor and research, and have a value independent of the object of the legislature.

Those on Herbaceous Plants and Birds cannot be of much value, as long as Bigelow and Nuttall are accessible. They serve but to indicate, with more or less exactness, what species are found in the State. We detect several errors ourselves, and a more practiced eye would no doubt expand the list.

The Quadrupeds deserved a more final and instructive report than they have obtained.

These volumes deal much in measurements and minute descriptions, not interesting to the general reader, with only here and there a colored sentence to allure him, like those plants growing in dark forests, which bear only leaves without blossoms. But the ground was comparatively unbroken, and we will not complain of the pioneer, if he raises no flowers with his first crop. Let us not underrate the value of a fact; it will one day flower in a truth. It is astonishing how few facts of importance are added in a century to the natural history of any animal. The natural history of man himself is still being gradually written. Men are knowing enough after their fashion. Every countryman and dairy-maid knows that the coats of the fourth stomach of the calf will curdle milk, and what particular mushroom is a safe and nutritious diet. You cannot go into any

field or wood, but it will seem as if every stone had been turned, and the bark on every tree ripped up. But, after all, it is much easier to discover than to see when the cover is off. It has been well said that "the attitude of inspection is prone." Wisdom does not inspect, but behold. We must look a long time before we can see. Slow are the beginnings of philosophy. He has something demoniacal in him, who can discern a law or couple two facts. We can imagine a time when "Water runs down hill" may have been taught in the schools. The true man of science will know nature better by his finer organization; he will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction and the application of mathematics to philosophy, but by direct intercourse and sympathy. It is with science as with ethics, — we cannot know truth by contrivance and method; the Baconian is as false as any other, and with all the helps of machinery and the arts, the most scientific will still be the healthiest and friendliest man, and possess a more perfect Indian wisdom.

A WALK TO WACHUSETT

CONCORD, July 19, 1842.

The needles of the pine
All to the west incline.

SUMMER and winter our eyes had rested on the dim outline of the mountains in our horizon, to which distance and indistinctness lent a grandeur not their own, so that they served equally to interpret all the allusions of poets and travelers; whether with Homer, on a spring morning, we sat down on the many-peaked Olympus, or with Virgil and his compeers roamed the Etrurian and Thessalian hills, or with Humboldt measured the more modern Andes and Teneriffe. Thus we spoke our mind to them, standing on the Concord cliffs: —

With frontier strength 'ye stand your ground'
With grand content ye circle round,
Tumultuous silence for all sound,
Ye distant nursery of rills,
Monadnock, and the Peterboro' hills;
Like some vast fleet,
Sailing through rain and sleet,
Through winter's cold and summer's heat;
Still holding on, upon your high emprise,
Until ye find a shore amid the skies;
Not skulking close to land,
With cargo contraband,
For they who sent a venture out by ye
Have set the sun to see
Their honesty.
Ships of the line, each one,
Ye to the westward run,

Always before the gale,
Under a press of sail,
With weight of metal all untold.
I seem to feel ye, in my firm seat here,
Immeasurable depth of hold,
And breadth of beam, and length of running gear.

Methinks ye take luxurious pleasure
In your novel western leisure;
So cool your brows, and freshly blue,
As Time had nought for ye to do;
For ye lie at your length,
An unappropriated strength,
Unhewn primeval timber,
For knees so stiff, for masts so limber;
The stock of which new earths are made
One day to be our western trade,
Fit for the stanchions of a world
Which through the seas of space is hurled.

While we enjoy a lingering ray,
Ye still o'ertop the western day,
Reposing yonder, on God's croft,
Like solid stacks of hay.
Edged with silver, and with gold,
The clouds hang o'er in damask fold,
And with such depth of amber light
The west is dight,
Where still a few rays slant,
That even heaven seems extravagant.
On the earth's edge mountains and trees
Stand as they were on air graven,
Or as the vessels in a haven
Await the morning breeze.
I fancy even
Through your defiles windeth the way to heaven;
And yonder still, in spite of history's page,
Linger the golden and the silver age;
Upon the laboring gale

The news of future centuries is brought,
And of new dynasties of thought,
From your remotest vale.

But special I remember thee,
Wachusett, who like me
Standest alone without society.
Thy far blue eye,
A remnant of the sky,
Seen through the clearing or the gorge
Or from the windows of the forge,
Doth leaven all it passes by.
Nothing is true,
But stands 'tween me and you,
Thou western pioneer,
Who know'st not shame nor fear
By venturous spirit driven,
Under the eaves of heaven.
And canst expand thee there,
And breathe enough of air?
Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
Thy pastime from thy birth,
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other;
May I approve myself thy worthy brother!

At length, like Rasselas, and other inhabitants of happy valleys, we resolved to scale the blue wall which bounded the western horizon, though not without misgivings that thereafter no visible fairyland would exist for us. But we will not leap at once to our journey's end, though near, but imitate Homer, who conducts his reader over the plain, and along the resounding sea, though it be but to the tent of Achilles. In the spaces of thought are the reaches of land and water, where men go and come. The landscape lies far and fair within, and the deepest thinker is the farthest traveled.

At a cool and early hour on a pleasant morning in July, my companion and I passed rapidly through Acton and Stow, stopping to rest and refresh us on the bank of a small stream, a tributary of the Assabet, in the latter town. As we traversed the cool woods of Acton, with stout staves in our hands, we were cheered by the song of the red-eye, the thrushes, the phœbe, and the cuckoo; and as we passed through the open country, we inhaled the fresh scent of every field, and all nature lay passive, to be viewed and traveled. Every rail, every farmhouse, seen dimly in the twilight, every tinkling sound told of peace and purity, and we moved happily along the dank roads, enjoying not such privacy as the day leaves when it withdraws, but such as it has not profaned. It was solitude with light; which is better than darkness. But anon, the sound of the mower's rifle was heard in the fields, and this, too, mingled with the lowing of kine.

This part of our route lay through the country of hops, which plant perhaps supplies the want of the vine in American scenery, and may remind the traveler of Italy and the South of France, whether he traverses the country when the hop-fields, as then, present solid and regular masses of verdure, hanging in graceful festoons from pole to pole, the cool coverts where lurk the gales which refresh the wayfarer; or in September, when the women and children, and the neighbors from far and near, are gathered to pick the hops into long troughs; or later still, when the poles stand piled in vast pyramids in the yards, or lie in heaps by the roadside.

The culture of the hop, with the processes of picking,

drying in the kiln, and packing for the market, as well as the uses to which it is applied, so analogous to the culture and uses of the grape, may afford a theme for future poets.

The mower in the adjacent meadow could not tell us the name of the brook on whose banks we had rested, or whether it had any, but his younger companion, perhaps his brother, knew that it was Great Brook. Though they stood very near together in the field, the things they knew were very far apart; nor did they suspect each other's reserved knowledge, till the stranger came by. In Bolton, while we rested on the rails of a cottage fence, the strains of music which issued from within, probably in compliment to us, sojourners, reminded us that thus far men were fed by the accustomed pleasures. So soon did we, wayfarers, begin to learn that man's life is rounded with the same few facts, the same simple relations everywhere, and it is vain to travel to find it new. The flowers grow more various ways than he. But coming soon to higher land, which afforded a prospect of the mountains, we thought we had not traveled in vain, if it were only to hear a truer and wilder pronunciation of their names from the lips of the inhabitants; not *Way-tatic*, *Way-chusett*, but *Wor-tatic*, *Wor-chusett*. It made us ashamed of our tame and civil pronunciation, and we looked upon them as born and bred farther west than we. Their tongues had a more generous accent than ours, as if breath was cheaper where they wagged. A countryman, who speaks but seldom, talks copiously, as it were, as his wife sets cream and cheese before you without stint. Before noon we

had reached the highlands overlooking the valley of Lancaster (affording the first fair and open prospect into the west), and there, on the top of a hill, in the shade of some oaks, near to where a spring bubbled out from a leaden pipe, we rested during the heat of the day, reading Virgil and enjoying the scenery. It was such a place as one feels to be on the outside of the earth; for from it we could, in some measure, see the form and structure of the globe. There lay Wachusett, the object of our journey, lowering upon us with unchanged proportions, though with a less ethereal aspect than had greeted our morning gaze, while further north, in successive order, slumbered its sister mountains along the horizon.

We could get no further into the *Æneid* than

— atque altae moenia Romae,
— and the wall of high Rome,

before we were constrained to reflect by what myriad tests a work of genius has to be tried; that Virgil, away in Rome, two thousand years off, should have to unfold his meaning, the inspiration of Italian vales, to the pilgrim on New England hills. This life so raw and modern, that so civil and ancient; and yet we read Virgil mainly to be reminded of the identity of human nature in all ages, and, by the poet's own account, we are both the children of a late age, and live equally under the reign of Jupiter.

“He shook honey from the leaves, and removed fire,
And stayed the wine, everywhere flowing in rivers;
That experience, by meditating, might invent various arts
By degrees, and seek the blade of corn in furrows,
And strike out hidden fire from the veins of the flint.”

The old world stands serenely behind the new, as

one mountain yonder towers behind another, more dim and distant. Rome imposes her story still upon this late generation. The very children in the school we had that morning passed had gone through her wars, and recited her alarms, ere they had heard of the wars of neighboring Lancaster. The roving eye still rests inevitably on her hills, and she still holds up the skirts of the sky on that side, and makes the past remote.

The lay of the land hereabouts is well worthy the attention of the traveler. The hill on which we were resting made part of an extensive range, running from southwest to northeast, across the country, and separating the waters of the Nashua from those of the Concord, whose banks we had left in the morning, and by bearing in mind this fact, we could easily determine whither each brook was bound that crossed our path. Parallel to this, and fifteen miles further west, beyond the deep and broad valley in which lie Groton, Shirley, Lancaster, and Boylston, runs the Wachusett range, in the same general direction. The descent into the valley on the Nashua side is by far the most sudden; and a couple of miles brought us to the southern branch of the Nashua, a shallow but rapid stream, flowing between high and gravelly banks. But we soon learned that these were no *gelidæ valles* into which we had descended, and, missing the coolness of the morning air, feared it had become the sun's turn to try his power upon us.

“The sultry sun had gained the middle sky,
And not a tree, and not an herb was nigh,”

and with melancholy pleasure we echoed the melodious plaint of our fellow-traveler, Hassan, in the desert, —

“Sad was the hour, and luckless was the day,
When first from Schiraz’ walls I bent my way.”

The air lay lifeless between the hills, as in a seething caldron, with no leaf stirring, and instead of the fresh odor of grass and clover, with which we had before been regaled, the dry scent of every herb seemed merely medicinal. Yielding, therefore, to the heat, we strolled into the woods, and along the course of a rivulet, on whose banks we loitered, observing at our leisure the products of these new fields. He who traverses the woodland paths, at this season, will have occasion to remember the small, drooping, bell-like flowers and slender red stem of the dogsbane, and the coarser stem and berry of the poke, which are both common in remoter and wilder scenes; and if “the sun casts such a reflecting heat from the sweet-fern” as makes him faint, when he is climbing the bare hills, as they complained who first penetrated into these parts, the cool fragrance of the swamp-pink restores him again, when traversing the valleys between.

As we went on our way late in the afternoon, we refreshed ourselves by bathing our feet in every rill that crossed the road, and anon, as we were able to walk in the shadows of the hills, recovered our morning elasticity. Passing through Sterling, we reached the banks of the Stillwater, in the western part of the town, at evening, where is a small village collected. We fancied that there was already a certain western look about this place, a smell of pines and roar of water, recently confined by dams, belying its name, which were exceedingly grateful. When the first inroad has been made, a few acres

leveled, and a few houses erected, the forest looks wilder than ever. Left to herself, nature is always more or less civilized, and delights in a certain refinement; but where the axe has encroached upon the edge of the forest, the dead and unsightly limbs of the pine, which she had concealed with green banks of verdure, are exposed to sight. This village had, as yet, no post-office, nor any settled name. In the small villages which we entered, the villagers gazed after us, with a complacent, almost compassionate look, as if we were just making our *début* in the world at a late hour. "Nevertheless," did they seem to say, "come and study us, and learn men and manners." So is each one's world but a clearing in the forest, so much open and inclosed ground. The landlord had not yet returned from the field with his men, and the cows had yet to be milked. But we remembered the inscription on the wall of the Swedish inn, "You will find at Trolhate excellent bread, meat, and wine, provided you bring them with you," and were contented. But I must confess it did somewhat disturb our pleasure, in this withdrawn spot, to have our own village newspaper handed us by our host, as if the greatest charm the country offered to the traveler was the facility of communication with the town. Let it recline on its own everlasting hills, and not be looking out from their summits for some petty Boston or New York in the horizon.

At intervals we heard the murmuring of water, and the slumberous breathing of crickets, throughout the night; and left the inn the next morning in the gray twilight, after it had been hallowed by the night air,

and when only the innocent cows were stirring, with a kind of regret. It was only four miles to the base of the mountain, and the scenery was already more picturesque. Our road lay along the course of the Stillwater, which was brawling at the bottom of a deep ravine, filled with pines and rocks, tumbling fresh from the mountains, so soon, alas! to commence its career of usefulness. At first, a cloud hung between us and the summit, but it was soon blown away. As we gathered the raspberries, which grew abundantly by the roadside, we fancied that that action was consistent with a lofty prudence; as if the traveler who ascends into a mountainous region should fortify himself by eating of such light ambrosial fruits as grow there, and drinking of the springs which gush out from the mountain-sides, as he gradually inhales the subtler and purer atmosphere of those elevated places, thus propitiating the mountain gods by a sacrifice of their own fruits. The gross products of the plains and valleys are for such as dwell therein; but it seemed to us that the juices of this berry had relation to the thin air of the mountain-tops.

In due time we began to ascend the mountain, passing, first, through a grand sugar maple wood, which bore the marks of the auger, then a denser forest, which gradually became dwarfed, till there were no trees whatever. We at length pitched our tent on the summit. It is but nineteen hundred feet above the village of Princeton, and three thousand above the level of the sea; but by this slight elevation it is infinitely removed from the plain, and when we reached it we felt a sense of remoteness, as if we had traveled into distant regions, to Arabia

Petræa, or the farthest East. A robin upon a staff was the highest object in sight. Swallows were flying about us, and the chewink and cuckoo were heard near at hand. The summit consists of a few acres, destitute of trees, covered with bare rocks, interspersed with blueberry bushes, raspberries, gooseberries, strawberries, moss, and a fine, wiry grass. The common yellow lily and dwarf cornel grow abundantly in the crevices of the rocks. This clear space, which is gently rounded, is bounded a few feet lower by a thick shrubbery of oaks, with maples, aspens, beeches, cherries, and occasionally a mountain-ash intermingled, among which we found the bright blue berries of the Solomon's-seal, and the fruit of the pyrola. From the foundation of a wooden observatory, which was formerly erected on the highest point, forming a rude, hollow structure of stone, a dozen feet in diameter, and five or six in height, we could see Monadnock, in simple grandeur, in the northwest, rising nearly a thousand feet higher, still the "far blue mountain," though with an altered profile. The first day the weather was so hazy that it was in vain we endeavored to unravel the obscurity. It was like looking into the sky again, and the patches of forest here and there seemed to flit like clouds over a lower heaven. As to voyagers of an aerial Polynesia, the earth seemed like a larger island in the ether; on every side, even as low as we, the sky shutting down, like an unfathomable deep, around it, a blue Pacific island, where who knows what islanders inhabit? and as we sail near its shores we see the waving of trees and hear the lowing of kine.

We read Virgil and Wordsworth in our tent, with

new pleasure there, while waiting for a clearer atmosphere, nor did the weather prevent our appreciating the simple truth and beauty of Peter Bell: —

“And he had lain beside his asses,
On lofty Cheviot Hills:

“And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars* ;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars.”

Who knows but this hill may one day be a Helvellyn, or even a Parnassus, and the Muses haunt here, and other Homers frequent the neighboring plains?

Not unconcerned Wachusett rears his head
Above the field, so late from nature won,
With patient brow reserved, as one who read
New annals in the history of man.

The blueberries which the mountain afforded, added to the milk we had brought, made our frugal supper, while for entertainment the even-song of the wood thrush rang along the ridge. Our eyes rested on no painted ceiling nor carpeted hall, but on skies of Nature's painting, and hills and forests of her embroidery. Before sunset, we rambled along the ridge to the north, while a hawk soared still above us. It was a place where gods might wander, so solemn and solitary, and removed from all contagion with the plain. As the evening came on, the haze was condensed in vapor, and the landscape became more distinctly visible, and numerous sheets of water were brought to light.

“Et jam summa procul villarum culmina fumant,
Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.”

And now the tops of the villas smoke afar off,
And the shadows fall longer from the high mountains.

As we stood on the stone tower while the sun was setting, we saw the shades of night creep gradually over the valleys of the east; and the inhabitants went into their houses, and shut their doors, while the moon silently rose up, and took possession of that part. And then the same scene was repeated on the west side, as far as the Connecticut and the Green Mountains, and the sun's rays fell on us two alone, of all New England men.

It was the night but one before the full of the moon, so bright that we could see to read distinctly by moonlight, and in the evening strolled over the summit without danger. There was, by chance, a fire blazing on Monadnock that night, which lighted up the whole western horizon, and, by making us aware of a community of mountains, made our position seem less solitary. But at length the wind drove us to the shelter of our tent, and we closed its door for the night, and fell asleep.

It was thrilling to hear the wind roar over the rocks, at intervals when we waked, for it had grown quite cold and windy. The night was, in its elements, simple even to majesty in that bleak place, — a bright moonlight and a piercing wind. It was at no time darker than twilight within the tent, and we could easily see the moon through its transparent roof as we lay; for there was the moon still above us, with Jupiter and Saturn on either hand, looking down on Wachusett, and it was a satisfaction to know that they were our fellow-travelers still, as high and out of our reach as our own destiny.

Truly the stars were given for a consolation to man. We should not know but our life were fated to be always groveling, but it is permitted to behold them, and surely they are deserving of a fair destiny. We see laws which never fail, of whose failure we never conceived; and their lamps burn all the night, too, as well as all day, — so rich and lavish is that nature which can afford this superfluity of light.

The morning twilight began as soon as the moon had set, and we arose and kindled our fire, whose blaze might have been seen for thirty miles around. As the daylight increased, it was remarkable how rapidly the wind went down. There was no dew on the summit, but coldness supplied its place. When the dawn had reached its prime, we enjoyed the view of a distinct horizon line, and could fancy ourselves at sea, and the distant hills the waves in the horizon, as seen from the deck of a vessel. The cherry-birds flitted around us, the nuthatch and flicker were heard among the bushes, the titmouse perched within a few feet, and the song of the wood thrush again rang along the ridge. At length we saw the sun rise up out of the sea, and shine on Massachusetts; and from this moment the atmosphere grew more and more transparent till the time of our departure, and we began to realize the extent of the view, and how the earth, in some degree, answered to the heavens in breadth, the white villages to the constellations in the sky. There was little of the sublimity and grandeur which belong to mountain scenery, but an immense landscape to ponder on a summer's day. We could see how ample and roomy is nature. As far as the eye could

reach there was little life in the landscape; the few birds that flitted past did not crowd. The travelers on the remote highways, which intersect the country on every side, had no fellow-travelers for miles, before or behind. On every side, the eye ranged over successive circles of towns, rising one above another, like the terraces of a vineyard, till they were lost in the horizon. Wachusett is, in fact, the observatory of the State. There lay Massachusetts, spread out before us in its length and breadth, like a map. There was the level horizon which told of the sea on the east and south, the well-known hills of New Hampshire on the north, and the misty summits of the Hoosac and Green Mountains, first made visible to us the evening before, blue and unsubstantial, like some bank of clouds which the morning wind would dissipate, on the northwest and west. These last distant ranges, on which the eye rests unwearied, commence with an abrupt boulder in the north, beyond the Connecticut, and travel southward, with three or four peaks dimly seen. But Monadnock, rearing its masculine front in the northwest, is the grandest feature. As we beheld it, we knew that it was the height of land between the two rivers, on this side the valley of the Merrimack, on that of the Connecticut, fluctuating with their blue seas of air, — these rival vales, already teeming with Yankee men along their respective streams, born to what destiny who shall tell? Watatic and the neighboring hills, in this State and in New Hampshire, are a continuation of the same elevated range on which we were standing. But that New Hampshire bluff, — that promontory of a State, — lowering day and night

on this our State of Massachusetts, will longest haunt our dreams.

We could at length realize the place mountains occupy on the land, and how they come into the general scheme of the universe. When first we climb their summits and observe their lesser irregularities, we do not give credit to the comprehensive intelligence which shaped them; but when afterward we behold their outlines in the horizon, we confess that the hand which moulded their opposite slopes, making one to balance the other, worked round a deep centre, and was privy to the plan of the universe. So is the least part of nature in its bearings referred to all space. These lesser mountain ranges, as well as the Alleghanies, run from northeast to southwest, and parallel with these mountain streams are the more fluent rivers, answering to the general direction of the coast, the bank of the great ocean stream itself. Even the clouds, with their thin bars, fall into the same direction by preference, and such even is the course of the prevailing winds, and the migration of men and birds. A mountain chain determines many things for the statesman and philosopher. The improvements of civilization rather creep along its sides than cross its summit. How often is it a barrier to prejudice and fanaticism ! In passing over these heights of land, through their thin atmosphere, the follies of the plain are refined and purified; and as many species of plants do not scale their summits, so many species of folly, no doubt, do not cross the Alleghanies; it is only the hardy mountain-plant that creeps quite over the ridge, and descends into the valley beyond.

We get a dim notion of the flight of birds, especially of such as fly high in the air, by having ascended a mountain. We can now see what landmarks mountains are to their migrations; how the Catskills and Highlands have hardly sunk to them, when Wachusett and Monadnock open a passage to the northeast; how they are guided, too, in their course by the rivers and valleys; and who knows but by the stars, as well as the mountain ranges, and not by the petty landmarks which we use. The bird whose eye takes in the Green Mountains on the one side, and the ocean on the other, need not be at a loss to find its way.

At noon we descended the mountain, and, having returned to the abodes of men, turned our faces to the east again; measuring our progress, from time to time, by the more ethereal hues which the mountain assumed. Passing swiftly through Stillwater and Sterling, as with a downward impetus, we found ourselves almost at home again in the green meadows of Lancaster, so like our own Concord, for both are watered by two streams which unite near their centres, and have many other features in common. There is an unexpected refinement about this scenery; level prairies of great extent, interspersed with elms and hop-fields and groves of trees, give it almost a classic appearance. This, it will be remembered, was the scene of Mrs. Rowlandson's capture, and of other events in the Indian wars, but from this July afternoon, and under that mild exterior, those times seemed as remote as the irruption of the Goths. They were the dark age of New England. On beholding a picture of a New England village as it then appeared,

with a fair open prospect, and a light on trees and river, as if it were broad noon, we find we had not thought the sun shone in those days, or that men lived in broad daylight then. We do not imagine the sun shining on hill and valley during Philip's war, nor on the war-path of Paugus, or Standish, or Church, or Lovell, with serene summer weather, but a dim twilight or night did those events transpire in. They must have fought in the shade of their own dusky deeds.

At length, as we plodded along the dusty roads, our thoughts became as dusty as they; all thought indeed stopped, thinking broke down, or proceeded only passively in a sort of rhythmical cadence of the confused material of thought, and we found ourselves mechanically repeating some familiar measure which timed with our tread; some verse of the Robin Hood ballads, for instance, which one can recommend to travel by: —

“Sweavens are swift, sayd lyttle John,
As the wind blows over the hill;
For if it be never so loud this night,
To-morrow it may be still.”

And so it went, up-hill and down, till a stone interrupted the line, when a new verse was chosen: —

“His shoote it was but loosely shott,
Yet flewe not the arrowe in vaine,
For it mett one of the sheriffe's men,
And William a Trent was slaine.”

There is, however, this consolation to the most way-worn traveler, upon the dustiest road, that the path his feet describe is so perfectly symbolical of human life, — now climbing the hills, now descending into the vales.

From the summits he beholds the heavens and the horizon, from the vales he looks up to the heights again. He is treading his old lessons still, and though he may be very weary and travel-worn, it is yet sincere experience.

Leaving the Nashua, we changed our route a little, and arrived at Stillriver Village, in the western part of Harvard, just as the sun was setting. From this place, which lies to the northward, upon the western slope of the same range of hills on which we had spent the noon before, in the adjacent town, the prospect is beautiful, and the grandeur of the mountain outlines unsurpassed. There was such a repose and quiet here at this hour, as if the very hillsides were enjoying the scene; and as we passed slowly along, looking back over the country we had traversed, and listening to the evening song of the robin, we could not help contrasting the equanimity of Nature with the bustle and impatience of man. His words and actions presume always a crisis near at hand, but she is forever silent and unpretending.

And now that we have returned to the desultory life of the plain, let us endeavor to import a little of that mountain grandeur into it. We will remember within what walls we lie, and understand that this level life too has its summit, and why from the mountain-top the deepest valleys have a tinge of blue; that there is elevation in every hour, as no part of the earth is so low that the heavens may not be seen from, and we have only to stand on the summit of our hour to command an uninterrupted horizon.

We rested that night at Harvard, and the next morning, while one bent his steps to the nearer village of

Groton, the other took his separate and solitary way to the peaceful meadows of Concord; but let him not forget to record the brave hospitality of a farmer and his wife, who generously entertained him at their board, though the poor wayfarer could only congratulate the one on the continuance of hay weather, and silently accept the kindness of the other. Refreshed by this instance of generosity, no less than by the substantial viands set before him, he pushed forward with new vigor, and reached the banks of the Concord before the sun had climbed many degrees into the heavens.

THE LANDLORD

UNDER the one word "house" are included the school-house, the almshouse, the jail, the tavern, the dwelling-house; and the meanest shed or cave in which men live contains the elements of all these. But nowhere on the earth stands the entire and perfect house. The Parthenon, St. Peter's, the Gothic minster, the palace, the hovel, are but imperfect executions of an imperfect idea. Who would dwell in them? Perhaps to the eye of the gods the cottage is more holy than the Parthenon, for they look down with no especial favor upon the shrines formally dedicated to them, and that should be the most sacred roof which shelters most of humanity. Surely, then, the gods who are most interested in the human race preside over the Tavern, where especially men congregate. Methinks I see the thousand shrines erected to Hospitality shining afar in all countries, as well Mahometan and Jewish as Christian, khans and caravansaries and inns, whither all pilgrims without distinction resort.

Likewise we look in vain, east or west over the earth, to find the perfect man; but each represents only some particular excellence. The Landlord is a man of more open and general sympathies, who possesses a spirit of hospitality which is its own reward, and feeds and shelters men from pure love of the creatures. To be sure, this profession is as often filled by imperfect characters, and such as have sought it from unworthy

motives, as any other, but so much the more should we prize the true and honest Landlord when we meet with him.

Who has not imagined to himself a country inn, where the traveler shall really feel *in*, and at home, and at his public house, who was before at his private house? — whose host is indeed a *host*, and a *lord* of the *land*, a self-appointed brother of his race; called to his place, beside, by all the winds of heaven and his good genius, as truly as the preacher is called to preach; a man of such universal sympathies, and so broad and genial a human nature, that he would fain sacrifice the tender but narrow ties of private friendship to a broad, sunshiny, fair-weather-and-foul friendship for his race; who loves men, not as a philosopher, with philanthropy, nor as an overseer of the poor, with charity, but by a necessity of his nature, as he loves dogs and horses; and standing at his open door from morning till night would fain see more and more of them come along the highway, and is never satiated. To him the sun and moon are but travelers, the one by day and the other by night; and they too patronize his house. To his imagination all things travel save his sign-post and himself; and though you may be his neighbor for years, he will show you only the civilities of the road. But on the other hand, while nations and individuals are alike selfish and exclusive, he loves all men equally; and if he treats his nearest neighbor as a stranger, since he has invited all nations to share his hospitality, the farthest-traveled is in some measure kindred to him who takes him into the bosom of his family.

He keeps a house of entertainment at the sign of the Black Horse or the Spread Eagle, and is known far and wide, and his fame travels with increasing radius every year. All the neighborhood is in his interest, and if the traveler ask how far to a tavern, he receives some such answer as this: "Well, sir, there's a house about three miles from here, where they have n't taken down their sign yet; but it's only ten miles to Slocum's, and that's a capital house, both for man and beast." At three miles he passes a cheerless barrack, standing desolate behind its sign-post, neither public nor private, and has glimpses of a discontented couple who have mistaken their calling. At ten miles see where the Tavern stands, — really an *entertaining* prospect, — so public and inviting that only the rain and snow do not enter. It is no gay pavilion, made of bright stuffs, and furnished with nuts and gingerbread, but as plain and sincere as a caravansary; located in no Tarrytown, where you receive only the civilities of commerce, but far in the fields it exercises a primitive hospitality, amid the fresh scent of new hay and raspberries, if it be summer-time, and the tinkling of cow-bells from invisible pastures; for it is a land flowing with milk and honey, and the newest milk courses in a broad, deep stream across the premises.

In these retired places the tavern is first of all a house, — elsewhere, last of all, or never, — and warms and shelters its inhabitants. It is as simple and sincere in its essentials as the caves in which the first men dwelt, but it is also as open and public. The traveler steps across the threshold, and lo! he too is master, for he only can be called proprietor of the house here who behaves with

most propriety in it. The Landlord stands clear back in nature, to my imagination, with his axe and spade felling trees and raising potatoes with the vigor of a pioneer; with Promethean energy making nature yield her increase to supply the wants of so many; and he is not so exhausted, nor of so short a stride, but that he comes forward even to the highway to this wide hospitality and publicity. Surely, he has solved some of the problems of life. He comes in at his back door, holding a log fresh cut for the hearth upon his shoulder with one hand, while he greets the newly arrived traveler with the other.

Here at length we have free range, as not in palaces, nor cottages, nor temples, and intrude nowhere. All the secrets of housekeeping are exhibited to the eyes of men, above and below, before and behind. This is the necessary way to live, men have confessed, in these days, and shall he skulk and hide? And why should we have any serious disgust at kitchens? Perhaps they are the holiest recess of the house. There is the hearth, after all, — and the settle, and the fagots, and the kettle, and the crickets. We have pleasant reminiscences of these. They are the heart, the left ventricle, the very vital part of the house. Here the real and sincere life which we meet in the streets was actually fed and sheltered. Here burns the taper that cheers the lonely traveler by night, and from this hearth ascend the smokes that populate the valley to his eyes by day. On the whole, a man may not be so little ashamed of any other part of his house, for here is his sincerity and earnest, at least. It may not be here that the besoms are plied most, — it is not here that they

need to be, for dust will not settle on the kitchen floor more than in nature.

Hence it will not do for the Landlord to possess too fine a nature. He must have health above the common accidents of life, subject to no modern fashionable diseases; but no taste, rather a vast relish or appetite. His sentiments on all subjects will be delivered as freely as the wind blows; there is nothing private or individual in them, though still original, but they are public, and of the hue of the heavens over his house,—a certain out-of-door obviousness and transparency not to be disputed. What he does, his manners are not to be complained of, though abstractly offensive, for it is what man does, and in him the race is exhibited. When he eats, he is liver and bowels and the whole digestive apparatus to the company, and so all admit the thing is done. He must have no idiosyncrasies, no particular bents or tendencies to this or that, but a general, uniform, and healthy development, such as his portly person indicates, offering himself equally on all sides to men. He is not one of your peaked and inhospitable men of genius, with particular tastes, but, as we said before, has one uniform relish, and taste which never aspires higher than a tavern-sign, or the cut of a weather-cock. The man of genius, like a dog with a bone, or the slave who has swallowed a diamond, or a patient with the gravel, sits afar and retired, off the road, hangs out no sign of refreshment for man and beast, but says, by all possible hints and signs, I wish to be alone, — good-by, — farewell. But the Landlord can afford to live without privacy. He entertains no private thought, he cherishes no

solitary hour, no Sabbath-day, but thinks, — enough to assert the dignity of reason, — and talks, and reads the newspaper. What he does not tell to one traveler he tells to another. He never wants to be alone, but sleeps, wakes, eats, drinks, sociably, still remembering his race. He walks abroad through the thoughts of men, and the Iliad and Shakespeare are tame to him, who hears the rude but homely incidents of the road from every traveler. The mail might drive through his brain in the midst of his most lonely soliloquy without disturbing his equanimity, provided it brought plenty of news and passengers. There can be no *profanity* where there is no fane behind, and the whole world may see quite round him. Perchance his lines have fallen to him in dustier places, and he has heroically sat down where two roads meet, or at the Four Corners or the Five Points, and his life is sublimely trivial for the good of men. The dust of travel blows ever in his eyes, and they preserve their clear, complacent look. The hourlies and half-hourlies, the dailies and weeklies, whirl on well-worn tracks, round and round his house, as if it were the goal in the stadium, and still he sits within in unruffled serenity, with no show of retreat. His neighbor dwells timidly behind a screen of poplars and willows, and a fence with sheaves of spears at regular intervals, or defended against the tender palms of visitors by sharp spikes, — but the traveler's wheels rattle over the door-step of the tavern, and he cracks his whip in the entry. He is truly glad to see you, and sincere as the bull's-eye over his door. The traveler seeks to find, wherever he goes, some one who will stand in this broad and catholic relation to him, who

will be an inhabitant of the land to him a stranger, and represent its human nature, as the rock stands for its inanimate nature; and this is he. As his crib furnishes provender for the traveler's horse, and his larder provisions for his appetite, so his conversation furnishes the necessary aliment to his spirits. He knows very well what a man wants, for he is a man himself, and as it were the farthest-traveled, though he has never stirred from his door. He understands his needs and destiny. He would be well fed and lodged, there can be no doubt, and have the transient sympathy of a cheerful companion, and of a heart which always prophesies fair weather. And after all the greatest men, even, want much more the sympathy which every honest fellow can give, than that which the great only can impart. If he is not the most upright, let us allow him this praise, that he is the most downright of men. He has a hand to shake and to be shaken, and takes a sturdy and unquestionable interest in you, as if he had assumed the care of you, but if you will break your neck, he will even give you the best advice as to the method.

The great poets have not been ungrateful to their landlords. Mine host of the Tabard Inn, in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, was an honor to his profession: —

“A semely man our Hoste was, with alle,
For to han been a marshal in an halle.
A large man he was, with eyen stepe;
A fairer burgeis was ther non in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wise, and well ytaught,
And of manhood him lacked righte naught.

Eke thereto was he right a mery man,
And after souper plaien he began,
And spake of mirthe amonges other thinges,
Whan that we hadden made our reckoninges."

He is the true house-band, and centre of the company, — of greater fellowship and practical social talent than any. He it is that proposes that each shall tell a tale to while away the time to Canterbury, and leads them himself, and concludes with his own tale, —

"Now, by my fader's soule that is ded,
But ye be mery, smiteth of my hed:
Hold up your hondes withouten more speche."

If we do not look up to the Landlord, we look round for him on all emergencies, for he is a man of infinite experience, who unites hands with wit. He is a more public character than a statesman, — a publican, and not consequently a sinner; and surely, he, if any, should be exempted from taxation and military duty.

Talking with our host is next best and instructive to talking with one's self. It is a more conscious soliloquy; as it were, to speak generally, and try what we would say provided we had an audience. He has indulgent and open ears, and does not require petty and particular statements. "Heigh-ho!" exclaims the traveler. Them's my sentiments, thinks mine host, and stands ready for what may come next, expressing the purest sympathy by his demeanor. "Hot as blazes!" says the other. "Hard weather, sir, — not much stirring nowadays," says he. He is wiser than to contradict his guest in any case; he lets him go on; he lets him travel.

The latest sitter leaves him standing far in the night, prepared to live right on, while suns rise and set, and his "good-night" has as brisk a sound as his "good-morning;" and the earliest riser finds him tasting his liquors in the bar ere flies begin to buzz, with a countenance fresh as the morning star over the sanded floor, — and not as one who had watched all night for travelers. And yet, if beds be the subject of conversation, it will appear that no man has been a sounder sleeper in his time.

Finally, as for his moral character, we do not hesitate to say that he has no grain of vice or meanness in him, but represents just that degree of virtue which all men relish without being obliged to respect. He is a good man, as his bitters are good, — an unquestionable goodness. Not what is called a good man, — good to be considered, as a work of art in galleries and museums, — but a good fellow, that is, good to be associated with. Who ever thought of the religion of an innkeeper, — whether he was joined to the Church, partook of the sacrament, said his prayers, feared God, or the like? No doubt he has had his experiences, has felt a change, and is a firm believer in the perseverance of the saints. In this last, we suspect, does the peculiarity of his religion consist. But he keeps an inn, and not a conscience. How many fragrant charities and sincere social virtues are implied in this daily offering of himself to the public! He cherishes good-will to all, and gives the wayfarer as good and honest advice to direct him on his road as the priest.

To conclude, the tavern will compare favorably with

the church. The church is the place where prayers and sermons are delivered, but the tavern is where they are to take effect, and if the former are good, the latter cannot be bad.

A WINTER WALK

THE wind has gently murmured through the blinds, or puffed with feathery softness against the windows, and occasionally sighed like a summer zephyr lifting the leaves along, the livelong night. The meadow mouse has slept in his snug gallery in the sod, the owl has sat in a hollow tree in the depth of the swamp, the rabbit, the squirrel, and the fox have all been housed. The watch-dog has lain quiet on the hearth, and the cattle have stood silent in their stalls. The earth itself has slept, as it were its first, not its last sleep, save when some street-sign or wood-house door has faintly creaked upon its hinge, cheering forlorn nature at her midnight work, — the only sound awake 'twixt Venus and Mars, — advertising us of a remote inward warmth, a divine cheer and fellowship, where gods are met together, but where it is very bleak for men to stand. But while the earth has slumbered, all the air has been alive with feathery flakes descending, as if some northern Ceres reigned, showering her silvery grain over all the fields.

We sleep, and at length awake to the still reality of a winter morning. The snow lies warm as cotton or down upon the window-sill; the broadened sash and frosted panes admit a dim and private light, which enhances the snug cheer within. The stillness of the morning is impressive. The floor creaks under our feet as we move toward the window to look abroad through some clear

space over the fields. We see the roofs stand under their snow burden. From the eaves and fences hang stalactites of snow, and in the yard stand stalagmites covering some concealed core. The trees and shrubs rear white arms to the sky on every side; and where were walls and fences, we see fantastic forms stretching in frolic gambols across the dusky landscape, as if Nature had strewn her fresh designs over the fields by night as models for man's art.

Silently we unlatch the door, letting the drift fall in, and step abroad to face the cutting air. Already the stars have lost some of their sparkle, and a dull, leaden mist skirts the horizon. A lurid brazen light in the east proclaims the approach of day, while the western landscape is dim and spectral still, and clothed in a sombre Tartarean light, like the shadowy realms. They are Infernal sounds only that you hear,—the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, the chopping of wood, the lowing of kine, all seem to come from Pluto's barnyard and beyond the Styx, — not for any melancholy they suggest, but their twilight bustle is too solemn and mysterious for earth. The recent tracks of the fox or otter, in the yard, remind us that each hour of the night is crowded with events, and the primeval nature is still working and making tracks in the snow. Opening the gate, we tread briskly along the lone country road, crunching the dry and crisped snow under our feet, or aroused by the sharp, clear creak of the wood-sled, just starting for the distant market, from the early farmer's door, where it has lain the summer long, dreaming amid the chips and stubble; while far through the drifts and

powdered windows we see the farmer's early candle, like a paled star, emitting a lonely beam, as if some severe virtue were at its matins there. And one by one the smokes begin to ascend from the chimneys amid the trees and snows.

The sluggish smoke curls up from some deep dell,
The stiffened air exploring in the dawn,
And making slow acquaintance with the day
Delaying now upon its heavenward course,
In wreathèd loiterings dallying with itself,
With as uncertain purpose and slow deed
As its half-wakened master by the hearth,
Whose mind still slumbering and sluggish thoughts
Have not yet swept into the onward current
Of the new day; — and now it streams afar,
The while the chopper goes with step direct,
And mind intent to swing the early axe.

First in the dusky dawn he sends abroad
His early scout, his emissary, smoke,
The earliest, latest pilgrim from the roof,
To feel the frosty air, inform the day;
And while he crouches still beside the hearth,
Nor musters courage to unbar the door,
It has gone down the glen with the light wind,
And o'er the plain unfurled its venturous wreath,
Draped the tree-tops, loitered upon the hill,
And warmed the pinions of the early bird;
And now, perchance, high in the crispy air,
Has caught sight of the day o'er the earth's edge,
And greets its master's eye at his low door,
As some refulgent cloud in the upper sky.

We hear the sound of wood-chopping at the farmers' doors, far over the frozen earth, the baying of the house-dog, and the distant clarion of the cock, — though the thin and frosty air conveys only the finer particles of

sound to our ears, with short and sweet vibrations, as the waves subside soonest on the purest and lightest liquids, in which gross substances sink to the bottom. They come clear and bell-like, and from a greater distance in the horizon, as if there were fewer impediments than in summer to make them faint and ragged. The ground is sonorous, like seasoned wood, and even the ordinary rural sounds are melodious, and the jingling of the ice on the trees is sweet and liquid. There is the least possible moisture in the atmosphere, all being dried up or congealed, and it is of such extreme tenuity and elasticity that it becomes a source of delight. The withdrawn and tense sky seems groined like the aisles of a cathedral, and the polished air sparkles as if there were crystals of ice floating in it. As they who have resided in Greenland tell us that when it freezes "the sea smokes like burning turf-land, and a fog or mist arises, called frost-smoke," which "cutting smoke frequently raises blisters on the face and hands, and is very pernicious to the health." But this pure, stinging cold is an elixir to the lungs, and not so much a frozen mist as a crystallized midsummer haze, refined and purified by cold.

The sun at length rises through the distant woods, as if with the faint clashing, swinging sound of cymbals, melting the air with his beams, and with such rapid steps the morning travels, that already his rays are gilding the distant western mountains. Meanwhile we step hastily along through the powdery snow, warmed by an inward heat, enjoying an Indian summer still, in the increased glow of thought and feeling. Probably

if our lives were more conformed to nature, we should not need to defend ourselves against her heats and colds, but find her our constant nurse and friend, as do plants and quadrupeds. If our bodies were fed with pure and simple elements, and not with a stimulating and heating diet, they would afford no more pasture for cold than a leafless twig, but thrive like the trees, which find even winter genial to their expansion.

The wonderful purity of nature at this season is a most pleasing fact. Every decayed stump and moss-grown stone and rail, and the dead leaves of autumn, are concealed by a clean napkin of snow. In the bare fields and tinkling woods, see what virtue survives. In the coldest and bleakest places, the warmest charities still maintain a foothold. A cold and searching wind drives away all contagion, and nothing can withstand it but what has a virtue in it, and accordingly, whatever we meet with in cold and bleak places, as the tops of mountains, we respect for a sort of sturdy innocence, a Puritan toughness. All things beside seem to be called in for shelter, and what stays out must be part of the original frame of the universe, and of such valor as God himself. It is invigorating to breathe the cleansed air. Its greater fineness and purity are visible to the eye, and we would fain stay out long and late, that the gales may sigh through us, too, as through the leafless trees, and fit us for the winter, — as if we hoped so to borrow some pure and steadfast virtue, which will stead us in all seasons.

There is a slumbering subterranean fire in nature which never goes out, and which no cold can chill. It

finally melts the great snow, and in January or July is only buried under a thicker or thinner covering. In the coldest day it flows somewhere, and the snow melts around every tree. This field of winter rye, which sprouted late in the fall, and now speedily dissolves the snow, is where the fire is very thinly covered. We feel warmed by it. In the winter, warmth stands for all virtue, and we resort in thought to a trickling rill, with its bare stones shining in the sun, and to warm springs in the woods, with as much eagerness as rabbits and robins. The steam which rises from swamps and pools is as dear and domestic as that of our own kettle. What fire could ever equal the sunshine of a winter's day, when the meadow mice come out by the wall-sides, and the chickadee lisps in the defiles of the wood? The warmth comes directly from the sun, and is not radiated from the earth, as in summer; and when we feel his beams on our backs as we are treading some snowy dell, we are grateful as for a special kindness, and bless the sun which has followed us into that by-place.

This subterranean fire has its altar in each man's breast; for in the coldest day, and on the bleakest hill, the traveler cherishes a warmer fire within the folds of his cloak than is kindled on any hearth. A healthy man, indeed, is the complement of the seasons, and in winter, summer is in his heart. There is the south. Thither have all birds and insects migrated, and around the warm springs in his breast are gathered the robin and the lark.

At length, having reached the edge of the woods, and shut out the gadding town, we enter within their

covert as we go under the roof of a cottage, and cross its threshold, all ceiled and banked up with snow. They are glad and warm still, and as genial and cheery in winter as in summer. As we stand in the midst of the pines in the flickering and checkered light which straggles but little way into their maze, we wonder if the towns have ever heard their simple story. It seems to us that no traveler has ever explored them, and notwithstanding the wonders which science is elsewhere revealing every day, who would not like to hear their annals? Our humble villages in the plain are their contribution. We borrow from the forest the boards which shelter and the sticks which warm us. How important is their evergreen to the winter, that portion of the summer which does not fade, the permanent year, the unwithered grass! Thus simply, and with little expense of altitude, is the surface of the earth diversified. What would human life be without forests, those natural cities? From the tops of mountains they appear like smooth-shaven lawns, yet whither shall we walk but in this taller grass?

In this glade covered with bushes of a year's growth, see how the silvery dust lies on every seared leaf and twig, deposited in such infinite and luxurious forms as by their very variety atone for the absence of color. Observe the tiny tracks of mice around every stem, and the triangular tracks of the rabbit. A pure elastic heaven hangs over all, as if the impurities of the summer sky, refined and shrunk by the chaste winter's cold, had been winnowed from the heavens upon the earth.

Nature confounds her summer distinctions at this season. The heavens seem to be nearer the earth. The elements are less reserved and distinct. Water turns to ice, rain to snow. The day is but a Scandinavian night. The winter is an arctic summer.

How much more living is the life that is in nature, the furred life which still survives the stinging nights, and, from amidst fields and woods covered with frost and snow, sees the sun rise!

“The foodless wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants.”

The gray squirrel and rabbit are brisk and playful in the remote glens, even on the morning of the cold Friday. Here is our Lapland and Labrador, and for our Esquimaux and Knistenaux, Dog-ribbed Indians, Novazemblaites, and Spitzbergeners, are there not the ice-cutter and woodchopper, the fox, muskrat, and mink?

Still, in the midst of the arctic day, we may trace the summer to its retreats, and sympathize with some contemporary life. Stretched over the brooks, in the midst of the frost-bound meadows, we may observe the submarine cottages of the caddis-worms, the larvæ of the Plicipennes; their small cylindrical cases built around themselves, composed of flags, sticks, grass, and withered leaves, shells, and pebbles, in form and color like the wrecks which strew the bottom, — now drifting along over the pebbly bottom, now whirling in tiny eddies and dashing down steep falls, or sweeping rapidly along with the current, or else swaying to and fro at the end of some grass-blade or root. Anon they

will leave their sunken habitations, and, crawling up the stems of plants, or to the surface, like gnats, as perfect insects henceforth, flutter over the surface of the water, or sacrifice their short lives in the flame of our candles at evening. Down yonder little glen the shrubs are drooping under their burden, and the red alder-berries contrast with the white ground. Here are the marks of a myriad feet which have already been abroad. The sun rises as proudly over such a glen as over the valley of the Seine or the Tiber, and it seems the residence of a pure and self-subsistent valor, such as they never witnessed,—which never knew defeat nor fear. Here reign the simplicity and purity of a primitive age, and a health and hope far remote from towns and cities. Standing quite alone, far in the forest, while the wind is shaking down snow from the trees, and leaving the only human tracks behind us, we find our reflections of a richer variety than the life of cities. The chickadee and nuthatch are more inspiring society than statesmen and philosophers, and we shall return to these last as to more vulgar companions. In this lonely glen, with its brook draining the slopes, its creased ice and crystals of all hues, where the spruces and hemlocks stand up on either side, and the rush and sere wild oats in the rivulet itself, our lives are more serene and worthy to contemplate.

As the day advances, the heat of the sun is reflected by the hillsides, and we hear a faint but sweet music, where flows the rill released from its fetters, and the icicles are melting on the trees; and the nuthatch and partridge are heard and seen. The south wind melts

the snow at noon, and the bare ground appears with its withered grass and leaves, and we are invigorated by the perfume which exhales from it, as by the scent of strong meats.

Let us go into this deserted woodman's hut, and see how he has passed the long winter nights and the short and stormy days. For here man has lived under this south hillside, and it seems a civilized and public spot. We have such associations as when the traveler stands by the ruins of Palmyra or Hecatompolis. Singing birds and flowers perchance have begun to appear here, for flowers as well as weeds follow in the footsteps of man. These hemlocks whispered over his head, these hickory logs were his fuel, and these pitch pine roots kindled his fire; yonder fuming rill in the hollow, whose thin and airy vapor still ascends as busily as ever, though he is far off now, was his well. These hemlock boughs, and the straw upon this raised platform, were his bed, and this broken dish held his drink. But he has not been here this season, for the phœbes built their nest upon this shelf last summer. I find some embers left as if he had but just gone out, where he baked his pot of beans; and while at evening he smoked his pipe, whose stemless bowl lies in the ashes, chatted with his only companion, if perchance he had any, about the depth of the snow on the morrow, already falling fast and thick without, or disputed whether the last sound was the screech of an owl, or the creak of a bough, or imagination only; and through his broad chimney-throat, in the late winter evening, ere he stretched himself upon the straw, he looked up to learn the progress

of the storm, and, seeing the bright stars of Cassiopeia's Chair shining brightly down upon him, fell contentedly asleep.

See how many traces from which we may learn the chopper's history! From this stump we may guess the sharpness of his axe, and from the slope of the stroke, on which side he stood, and whether he cut down the tree without going round it or changing hands; and, from the flexure of the splinters, we may know which way it fell. This one chip contains inscribed on it the whole history of the woodchopper and of the world. On this scrap of paper, which held his sugar or salt, perchance, or was the wadding of his gun, sitting on a log in the forest, with what interest we read the tattle of cities, of those larger huts, empty and to let, like this, in High Streets and Broadways. The eaves are dripping on the south side of this simple roof, while the titmouse lisps in the pine and the genial warmth of the sun around the door is somewhat kind and human.

After two seasons, this rude dwelling does not deform the scene. Already the birds resort to it, to build their nests, and you may track to its door the feet of many quadrupeds. Thus, for a long time, nature overlooks the encroachment and profanity of man. The wood still cheerfully and unsuspectingly echoes the strokes of the axe that fells it, and while they are few and seldom, they enhance its wildness, and all the elements strive to naturalize the sound.

Now our path begins to ascend gradually to the top of this high hill, from whose precipitous south side we can look over the broad country of forest and field and

river, to the distant snowy mountains. See yonder thin column of smoke curling up through the woods from some invisible farmhouse, the standard raised over some rural homestead. There must be a warmer and more genial spot there below, as where we detect the vapor from a spring forming a cloud above the trees. What fine relations are established between the traveler who discovers this airy column from some eminence in the forest and him who sits below! Up goes the smoke as silently and naturally as the vapor exhales from the leaves, and as busy disposing itself in wreaths as the housewife on the hearth below. It is a hieroglyphic of man's life, and suggests more intimate and important things than the boiling of a pot. Where its fine column rises above the forest, like an ensign, some human life has planted itself, — and such is the beginning of Rome, the establishment of the arts, and the foundation of empires, whether on the prairies of America or the steppes of Asia.

And now we descend again, to the brink of this woodland lake, which lies in a hollow of the hills, as if it were their expressed juice, and that of the leaves which are annually steeped in it. Without outlet or inlet to the eye, it has still its history, in the lapse of its waves, in the rounded pebbles on its shore, and in the pines which grow down to its brink. It has not been idle, though sedentary, but, like Abu Musa, teaches that "sitting still at home is the heavenly way; the going out is the way of the world." Yet in its evaporation it travels as far as any. In summer it is the earth's liquid eye, a mirror in the breast of nature. The sins of the

wood are washed out in it. See how the woods form an amphitheatre about it, and it is an arena for all the genialness of nature. All trees direct the traveler to its brink, all paths seek it out, birds fly to it, quadrupeds flee to it, and the very ground inclines toward it. It is nature's saloon, where she has sat down to her toilet. Consider her silent economy and tidiness; how the sun comes with his evaporation to sweep the dust from its surface each morning, and a fresh surface is constantly welling up; and annually, after whatever impurities have accumulated herein, its liquid transparency appears again in the spring. In summer a hushed music seems to sweep across its surface. But now a plain sheet of snow conceals it from our eyes, except where the wind has swept the ice bare, and the sere leaves are gliding from side to side, tacking and veering on their tiny voyages. Here is one just keeled up against a pebble on shore, a dry beech leaf, rocking still, as if it would start again. A skillful engineer, methinks, might project its course since it fell from the parent stem. Here are all the elements for such a calculation. Its present position, the direction of the wind, the level of the pond, and how much more is given. In its scarred edges and veins is its log rolled up.

We fancy ourselves in the interior of a larger house. The surface of the pond is our deal table or sanded floor, and the woods rise abruptly from its edge, like the walls of a cottage. The lines set to catch pickerel through the ice look like a larger culinary preparation, and the men stand about on the white ground like pieces of forest furniture. The actions of these men, at the dis-

tance of half a mile over the ice and snow, impress us as when we read the exploits of Alexander in history. They seem not unworthy of the scenery, and as momentous as the conquest of kingdoms.

Again we have wandered through the arches of the wood, until from its skirts we hear the distant booming of ice from yonder bay of the river, as if it were moved by some other and subtler tide than oceans know. To me it has a strange sound of home, thrilling as the voice of one's distant and noble kindred. A mild summer sun shines over forest and lake, and though there is but one green leaf for many rods, yet nature enjoys a serene health. Every sound is fraught with the same mysterious assurance of health, as well now the creaking of the boughs in January, as the soft sough of the wind in July.

When Winter fringes every bough
With his fantastic wreath,
And puts the seal of silence now
Upon the leaves beneath;

When every stream in its penthouse
Goes gurgling on its way,
And in his gallery the mouse
Nibbleth the meadow hay;

Methinks the summer still is nigh,
And lurketh underneath,
As that same meadow mouse doth lie
Snug in that last year's heath.

And if perchance the chickadee
Lisp a faint note anon,
The snow is summer's canopy,
Which she herself put on.

Fair blossoms deck the cheerful trees,
And dazzling fruits depend;
The north wind sighs a summer breeze,
The nipping frosts to fend,

Bringing glad tidings unto me,
The while I stand all ear,
Of a serene eternity,
Which need not winter fear.

Out on the silent pond straightway
The restless ice doth crack,
And pond sprites merry gambols play
Amid the deafening rack.

Eager I hasten to the vale,
As if I heard brave news,
How nature held high festival,
Which it were hard to lose.

I gambol with my neighbor ice,
And sympathizing quake,
As each new crack darts in a trice
Across the gladsome lake.

One with the cricket in the ground,
And fagot on the hearth,
Resounds the rare domestic sound
Along the forest path.

Before night we will take a journey on skates along
the course of this meandering river, as full of novelty
to one who sits by the cottage fire all the winter's day,
as if it were over the polar ice, with Captain Parry or
Franklin; following the winding of the stream, now
flowing amid hills, now spreading out into fair meadows,
and forming a myriad coves and bays where the pine

and hemlock overarch. The river flows in the rear of the towns, and we see all things from a new and wilder side. The fields and gardens come down to it with a frankness, and freedom from pretension, which they do not wear on the highway. It is the outside and edge of the earth. Our eyes are not offended by violent contrasts. The last rail of the farmer's fence is some swaying willow bough, which still preserves its freshness, and here at length all fences stop, and we no longer cross any road. We may go far up within the country now by the most retired and level road, never climbing a hill, but by broad levels ascending to the upland meadows. It is a beautiful illustration of the law of obedience, the flow of a river; the path for a sick man, a highway down which an acorn cup may float secure with its freight. Its slight occasional falls, whose precipices would not diversify the landscape, are celebrated by mist and spray, and attract the traveler from far and near. From the remote interior, its current conducts him by broad and easy steps, or by one gentler inclined plane, to the sea. Thus by an early and constant yielding to the inequalities of the ground it secures itself the easiest passage.

No domain of nature is quite closed to man at all times, and now we draw near to the empire of the fishes. Our feet glide swiftly over unfathomed depths, where in summer our line tempted the pout and perch, and where the stately pickerel lurked in the long corridors formed by the bulrushes. The deep, impenetrable marsh, where the heron waded and bittern squatted, is made pervious to our swift shoes, as if a thousand railroads had been made into it. With one impulse we are carried to the

cabin of the muskrat, that earliest settler, and see him dart away under the transparent ice, like a furred fish, to his hole in the bank; and we glide rapidly over meadows where lately "the mower whet his scythe," through beds of frozen cranberries mixed with meadow-grass. We skate near to where the blackbird, the pewee, and the kingbird hung their nests over the water, and the hornets builded from the maple in the swamp. How many gay warblers, following the sun, have radiated from this nest of silver birch and thistle-down! On the swamp's outer edge was hung the supermarine village, where no foot penetrated. In this hollow tree the wood duck reared her brood, and slid away each day to forage in yonder fen.

In winter, nature is a cabinet of curiosities, full of dried specimens, in their natural order and position. The meadows and forests are a *hortus siccus*. The leaves and grasses stand perfectly pressed by the air without screw or gum, and the birds' nests are not hung on an artificial twig, but where they builded them. We go about dry-shod to inspect the summer's work in the rank swamp, and see what a growth have got the alders, the willows, and the maples; testifying to how many warm suns, and fertilizing dews and showers. See what strides their boughs took in the luxuriant summer, — and anon these dormant buds will carry them onward and upward another span into the heavens.

Occasionally we wade through fields of snow, under whose depths the river is lost for many rods, to appear again to the right or left, where we least expected; still holding on its way underneath, with a faint, stertorous,

rumbling sound, as if, like the bear and marmot, it too had hibernated, and we had followed its faint summer trail to where it earthed itself in snow and ice. At first we should have thought that rivers would be empty and dry in midwinter, or else frozen solid till the spring thawed them; but their volume is not diminished even, for only a superficial cold bridges their surfaces. The thousand springs which feed the lakes and streams are flowing still. The issues of a few surface springs only are closed, and they go to swell the deep reservoirs. Nature's wells are below the frost. The summer brooks are not filled with snow-water, nor does the mower quench his thirst with that alone. The streams are swollen when the snow melts in the spring, because nature's work has been delayed, the water being turned into ice and snow, whose particles are less smooth and round, and do not find their level so soon.

Far over the ice, between the hemlock woods and snow-clad hills, stands the pickerel-fisher, his lines set in some retired cove, like a Finlander, with his arms thrust into the pouches of his dreadnaught; with dull, snowy, fishy thoughts, himself a finless fish, separated a few inches from his race; dumb, erect, and made to be enveloped in clouds and snows, like the pines on shore. In these wild scenes, men stand about in the scenery, or move deliberately and heavily, having sacrificed the sprightliness and vivacity of towns to the dumb sobriety of nature. He does not make the scenery less wild, more than the jays and muskrats, but stands there as a part of it, as the natives are represented in the voyages of early navigators, at Nootka Sound, and on the North-

west coast, with their furs about them, before they were tempted to loquacity by a scrap of iron. He belongs to the natural family of man, and is planted deeper in nature and has more root than the inhabitants of towns. Go to him, ask what luck, and you will learn that he too is a worshiper of the unseen. Hear with what sincere deference and waving gesture in his tone he speaks of the lake pickerel, which he has never seen, his primitive and ideal race of pickerel. He is connected with the shore still, as by a fish-line, and yet remembers the season when he took fish through the ice on the pond, while the peas were up in his garden at home.

But now, while we have loitered, the clouds have gathered again, and a few straggling snowflakes are beginning to descend. Faster and faster they fall, shutting out the distant objects from sight. The snow falls on every wood and field, and no crevice is forgotten; by the river and the pond, on the hill and in the valley. Quadrupeds are confined to their coverts and the birds sit upon their perches this peaceful hour. There is not so much sound as in fair weather, but silently and gradually every slope, and the gray walls and fences, and the polished ice, and the sere leaves, which were not buried before, are concealed, and the tracks of men and beasts are lost. With so little effort does nature reassert her rule and blot out the traces of men. Hear how Homer has described the same: "The snowflakes fall thick and fast on a winter's day. The winds are lulled, and the snow falls incessant, covering the tops of the mountains, and the hills, and the plains where the lotus-tree grows, and the cultivated fields, and they are falling

by the inlets and shores of the foaming sea, but are silently dissolved by the waves." The snow levels all things, and infolds them deeper in the bosom of nature, as, in the slow summer, vegetation creeps up to the entablature of the temple, and the turrets of the castle, and helps her to prevail over art.

The surly night-wind rustles through the wood, and warns us to retrace our steps, while the sun goes down behind the thickening storm, and birds seek their roosts, and cattle their stalls.

"Drooping the lab'rer ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and *now* demands
The fruit of all his toil."

Though winter is represented in the almanac as an old man, facing the wind and sleet, and drawing his cloak about him, we rather think of him as a merry wood-chopper, and warm-blooded youth, as blithe as summer. The unexplored grandeur of the storm keeps up the spirits of the traveler. It does not trifle with us, but has a sweet earnestness. In winter we lead a more inward life. Our hearts are warm and cheery, like cottages under drifts, whose windows and doors are half concealed, but from whose chimneys the smoke cheerfully ascends. The imprisoning drifts increase the sense of comfort which the house affords, and in the coldest days we are content to sit over the hearth and see the sky through the chimney-top, enjoying the quiet and serene life that may be had in a warm corner by the chimney-side, or feeling our pulse by listening to the low of cattle in the street, or the sound of the flail in distant barns all the long afternoon. No doubt a skillful physician could

determine our health by observing how these simple and natural sounds affected us. We enjoy now, not an Oriental, but a Boreal leisure, around warm stoves and fireplaces, and watch the shadow of motes in the sunbeams.

Sometimes our fate grows too homely and familiarly serious ever to be cruel. Consider how for three months the human destiny is wrapped in furs. The good Hebrew Revelation takes no cognizance of all this cheerful snow. Is there no religion for the temperate and frigid zones? We know of no scripture which records the pure benignity of the gods on a New England winter night. Their praises have never been sung, only their wrath deprecated. The best scripture, after all, records but a meagre faith. Its saints live reserved and austere. Let a brave, devout man spend the year in the woods of Maine or Labrador, and see if the Hebrew Scriptures speak adequately to his condition and experience, from the setting in of winter to the breaking up of the ice.

Now commences the long winter evening around the farmer's hearth, when the thoughts of the indwellers travel far abroad, and men are by nature and necessity charitable and liberal to all creatures. Now is the happy resistance to cold, when the farmer reaps his reward, and thinks of his preparedness for winter, and, through the glittering panes, sees with equanimity "the mansion of the northern bear," for now the storm is over, —

"The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds disclosing to the view,
Shines out intensely keen; and all one cope
Of starry glitter glows from pole to pole."

THE SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES ¹

EVERY man is entitled to come to Cattle-Show, even a transcendentalist; and for my part I am more interested in the men than in the cattle. I wish to see once more those old familiar faces, whose names I do not know, which for me represent the Middlesex country, and come as near being indigenous to the soil as a white man can; the men who are not above their business, whose coats are not too black, whose shoes do not shine very much, who never wear gloves to conceal their hands. It is true, there are some queer specimens of humanity attracted to our festival, but all are welcome. I am pretty sure to meet once more that weak-minded and whimsical fellow, generally weak-bodied too, who prefers a crooked stick for a cane; perfectly useless, you would say, only *bizarre*, fit for a cabinet, like a petrified snake. A ram's horn would be as convenient, and is yet more curiously twisted. He brings that much indulged bit of the country with him, from some town's end or other, and introduces it to Concord groves, as if he had promised it so much sometime. So some, it seems to me, elect their rulers for their crookedness. But I think that a straight stick makes the best cane, and an upright man the best ruler. Or why choose a man to do plain work who is distinguished for his oddity? However, I do not know

¹ An Address read to the Middlesex Agricultural Society in Concord, September, 1860.

but you will think that they have committed this mistake who invited me to speak to you to-day.

In my capacity of surveyor, I have often talked with some of you, my employers, at your dinner-tables, after having gone round and round and behind your farming, and ascertained exactly what its limits were. Moreover, taking a surveyor's and a naturalist's liberty, I have been in the habit of going across your lots much oftener than is usual, as many of you, perhaps to your sorrow, are aware. Yet many of you, to my relief, have seemed not to be aware of it; and, when I came across you in some out-of-the-way nook of your farms, have inquired, with an air of surprise, if I were not lost, since you had never seen me in that part of the town or county before; when, if the truth were known, and it had not been for betraying my secret, I might with more propriety have inquired if *you* were not lost, since I had never seen *you* there before. I have several times shown the proprietor the shortest way out of his wood-lot.

Therefore, it would seem that I have some title to speak to you to-day; and considering what that title is, and the occasion that has called us together, I need offer no apology if I invite your attention, for the few moments that are allotted me, to a purely scientific subject.

At those dinner-tables referred to, I have often been asked, as many of you have been, if I could tell how it happened, that when a pine wood was cut down an oak one commonly sprang up, and *vice versa*. To which I have answered, and now answer, that I can tell, — that it is no mystery to me. As I am not aware that this has been clearly shown by any one, I shall lay the more stress

on this point. Let me lead you back into your wood-lots again.

When, hereabouts, a single forest tree or a forest springs up naturally where none of its kind grew before, I do not hesitate to say, though in some quarters still it may sound paradoxical, that it came from a seed. Of the various ways by which trees are *known* to be propagated, — by transplanting, cuttings, and the like, — this is the only supposable one under these circumstances. No such tree has ever been known to spring from anything else. If any one asserts that it sprang from something else, or from nothing, the burden of proof lies with him.

It remains, then, only to show how the seed is transported from where it grows to where it is planted. This is done chiefly by the agency of the wind, water, and animals. The lighter seeds, as those of pines and maples, are transported chiefly by wind and water; the heavier, as acorns and nuts, by animals.

In all the pines, a very thin membrane, in appearance much like an insect's wing, grows over and around the seed, and independent of it, while the latter is being developed within its base. Indeed this is often perfectly developed, though the seed is abortive; nature being, you would say, more sure to provide the means of transporting the seed, than to provide the seed to be transported. In other words, a beautiful thin sack is woven around the seed, with a handle to it such as the wind can take hold of, and it is then committed to the wind, expressly that it may transport the seed and extend the range of the species; and this it does, as effectually as when seeds are sent by mail in a different kind of sack.

from the Patent Office. There is a patent office at the seat of government of the universe, whose managers are as much interested in the dispersion of seeds as anybody at Washington can be, and their operations are infinitely more extensive and regular.

There is, then, no necessity for supposing that the pines have sprung up from nothing, and I am aware that I am not at all peculiar in asserting that they come from seeds, though the mode of their propagation *by nature* has been but little attended to. They are very extensively raised from the seed in Europe, and are beginning to be here.

When you cut down an oak wood, a pine wood will not *at once* spring up there unless there are, or have been quite recently, seed-bearing pines near enough for the seeds to be blown from them. But, adjacent to a forest of pines, if you prevent other crops from growing there, you will surely have an extension of your pine forest, provided the soil is suitable.

As for the heavy seeds and nuts which are not furnished with wings, the notion is still a very common one that, when the trees which bear these spring up where none of their kind were noticed before, they have come from seeds or other principles spontaneously generated there in an unusual manner, or which have lain dormant in the soil for centuries, or perhaps been called into activity by the heat of a burning. I do not believe these assertions, and I will state some of the ways in which, according to my observation, such forests are planted and raised.

Every one of these seeds, too, will be found to be winged or legged in another fashion. Surely it is not

wonderful that cherry trees of all kinds are widely dispersed, since their fruit is well known to be the favorite food of various birds. Many kinds are called bird cherries, and they appropriate many more kinds, which are not so called. Eating cherries is a bird-like employment, and unless we disperse the seeds occasionally, as they do, I shall think that the birds have the best right to them. See how artfully the seed of a cherry is placed in order that a bird may be compelled to transport it, — in the very midst of a tempting pericarp, so that the creature that would devour this must commonly take the stone also into its mouth or bill. If you ever ate a cherry, and did not make two bites of it, you must have perceived it, — right in the centre of the luscious morsel, a large earthy residuum left on the tongue. We thus take into our mouths cherry-stones as big as peas, a dozen at once, for Nature can persuade us to do almost anything when she would compass her ends. Some wild men and children instinctively swallow these, as the birds do when in a hurry, it being the shortest way to get rid of them. Thus, though these seeds are not provided with vegetable wings, Nature has impelled the thrush tribe to take them into their bills and fly away with them; and they are winged in another sense, and more effectually than the seeds of pines, for these are carried even against the wind. The consequence is, that cherry trees grow not only here but there. The same is true of a great many other seeds.

But to come to the observation which suggested these remarks. As I have said, I suspect that I can throw some light on the fact that when hereabouts a dense pine

wood is cut down, oaks and other hard woods may at once take its place. I have got only to show that the acorns and nuts, provided they are grown in the neighborhood, are regularly planted in such woods; for I assert that if an oak tree has not grown within ten miles, and man has not carried acorns thither, then an oak wood will not spring up *at once*, when a pine wood is cut down.

Apparently, there were only pines there before. They are cut off, and after a year or two you see oaks and other hard woods springing up there, with scarcely a pine amid them, and the wonder commonly is, how the seed could have lain in the ground so long without decaying. But the truth is, that it has not lain in the ground so long, but is regularly planted each year by various quadrupeds and birds.

In this neighborhood, where oaks and pines are about equally dispersed, if you look through the thickest pine wood, even the seemingly unmixed pitch pine ones, you will commonly detect many little oaks, birches, and other hard woods, sprung from seeds carried into the thicket by squirrels and other animals, and also blown thither, but which are overshadowed and choked by the pines. The denser the evergreen wood, the more likely it is to be well planted with these seeds, because the planters incline to resort with their forage to the closest covert. They also carry it into birch and other woods. This planting is carried on annually, and the oldest seedlings annually die; but when the pines are cleared off, the oaks, having got just the start they want, and now secured favorable conditions, immediately spring up to trees.

The shade of a dense pine wood is more unfavorable to the springing up of pines of the same species than of oaks within it, though the former may come up abundantly when the pines are cut, if there chance to be sound seed in the ground.

But when you cut off a lot of hard wood, very often the little pines mixed with it have a similar start, for the squirrels have carried off the nuts to the pines, and not to the more open wood, and they commonly make pretty clean work of it; and moreover, if the wood was old, the sprouts will be feeble or entirely fail; to say nothing about the soil being, in a measure, exhausted for this kind of crop.

If a pine wood is surrounded by a white oak one chiefly, white oaks may be expected to succeed when the pines are cut. If it is surrounded instead by an edging of shrub oaks, then you will probably have a dense shrub oak thicket.

I have no time to go into details, but will say, in a word, that while the wind is conveying the seeds of pines into hard woods and open lands, the squirrels and other animals are conveying the seeds of oaks and walnuts into the pine woods, and thus a rotation of crops is kept up.

I affirmed this confidently many years ago, and an occasional examination of dense pine woods confirmed me in my opinion. It has long been known to observers that squirrels bury nuts in the ground, but I am not aware that any one has thus accounted for the regular succession of forests.

On the 24th of September, in 1857, as I was paddling down the Assabet, in this town, I saw a red squirrel run

along the bank under some herbage, with something large in its mouth. It stopped near the foot of a hemlock, within a couple of rods of me, and, hastily pawing a hole with its fore feet, dropped its booty into it, covered it up, and retreated part way up the trunk of the tree. As I approached the shore to examine the deposit, the squirrel, descending part way, betrayed no little anxiety about its treasure, and made two or three motions to recover it before it finally retreated. Digging there, I found two green pignuts joined together, with the thick husks on, buried about an inch and a half under the reddish soil of decayed hemlock leaves, — just the right depth to plant it. In short, this squirrel was then engaged in accomplishing two objects, to wit, laying up a store of winter food for itself, and planting a hickory wood for all creation. If the squirrel was killed, or neglected its deposit, a hickory would spring up. The nearest hickory tree was twenty rods distant. These nuts were there still just fourteen days later, but were gone when I looked again, November 21st, or six weeks later still.

I have since examined more carefully several dense woods, which are said to be, and are apparently, exclusively pine, and always with the same result. For instance, I walked the same day to a small but very dense and handsome white pine grove, about fifteen rods square, in the east part of this town. The trees are large for Concord, being from ten to twenty inches in diameter, and as exclusively pine as any wood that I know. Indeed, I selected this wood because I thought it the least likely to contain anything else. It stands on an open plain or pasture, except that it adjoins an-

other small pine wood, which has a few little oaks in it, on the southeast side. On every other side, it was at least thirty rods from the nearest woods. Standing on the edge of this grove and looking through it, for it is quite level and free from underwood, for the most part bare, red-carpeted ground, you would have said that there was not a hardwood tree in it, young or old. But on looking carefully along over its floor I discovered, though it was not till my eye had got used to the search, that, alternating with thin ferns, and small blueberry bushes, there was, not merely here and there, but as often as every five feet and with a degree of regularity, a little oak, from three to twelve inches high, and in one place I found a green acorn dropped by the base of a pine.

I confess I was surprised to find my theory so perfectly proved in this case. One of the principal agents in this planting, the red squirrels, were all the while curiously inspecting me, while I was inspecting their plantation. Some of the little oaks had been browsed by cows, which resorted to this wood for shade.

After seven or eight years, the hard woods evidently find such a locality unfavorable to their growth, the pines being allowed to stand. As an evidence of this, I observed a diseased red maple twenty-five feet long, which had been recently prostrated, though it was still covered with green leaves, the only maple in any position in the wood.

But although these oaks almost invariably die if the pines are not cut down, it is probable that they do better for a few years under their shelter than they would anywhere else.

The very extensive and thorough experiments of the English have at length led them to adopt a method of raising oaks almost precisely like this which somewhat earlier had been adopted by Nature and her squirrels here; they have simply rediscovered the value of pines as nurses for oaks. The English experimenters seem, early and generally, to have found out the importance of using trees of some kind as nurse-plants for the young oaks. I quote from Loudon what he describes as "the ultimatum on the subject of planting and sheltering oaks," — "an abstract of the practice adopted by the government officers in the national forests" of England, prepared by Alexander Milne.

At first some oaks had been planted by themselves, and others mixed with Scotch pines; "but in all cases," says Mr. Milne, "where oaks were planted actually among the pines and surrounded by them [though the soil might be inferior], the oaks were found to be much the best." "For several years past, the plan pursued has been to plant the inclosures with Scotch pines only [a tree very similar to our pitch pine], and when the pines have got to the height of five or six feet, then to put in good strong oak plants of about four or five years' growth among the pines, — not cutting away any pines at first, unless they happen to be so strong and thick as to overshadow the oaks. In about two years it becomes necessary to shred the branches of the pines, to give light and air to the oaks, and in about two or three more years to begin gradually to remove the pines altogether, taking out a certain number each year, so that, at the end of twenty or twenty-five years, not a single Scotch

pine shall be left; although, for the first ten or twelve years, the plantation may have appeared to contain nothing else but pine. The advantage of this mode of planting has been found to be that the pines dry and ameliorate the soil, destroying the coarse grass and brambles which frequently choke and injure oaks; and that no mending over is necessary, as scarcely an oak so planted is found to fail."

Thus much the English planters have discovered by patient experiment, and, for aught I know, they have taken out a patent for it; but they appear not to have discovered that it was discovered before, and that they are merely adopting the method of Nature, which she long ago made patent to all. She is all the while planting the oaks amid the pines without our knowledge, and at last, instead of government officers, we send a party of woodchoppers to cut down the pines, and so rescue an oak forest, at which we wonder as if it had dropped from the skies.

As I walk amid hickories, even in August, I hear the sound of green pignuts falling from time to time, cut off by the chickaree over my head. In the fall, I notice on the ground, either within or in the neighborhood of oak woods, on all sides of the town, stout oak twigs three or four inches long, bearing half a dozen empty acorn-cups, which twigs have been gnawed off by squirrels, on both sides of the nuts, in order to make them more portable. The jays scream and the red squirrels scold while you are clubbing and shaking the chestnut trees, for they are there on the same errand, and two of a trade never agree. I frequently see a red or gray

squirrel cast down a green chestnut bur, as I am going through the woods, and I used to think, sometimes, that they were cast at me. In fact, they are so busy about it, in the midst of the chestnut season, that you cannot stand long in the woods without hearing one fall. A sportsman told me that he had, the day before, —that was in the middle of October,—seen a green chestnut bur dropped on our great river meadow, fifty rods from the nearest wood, and much further from the nearest chestnut tree, and he could not tell how it came there. Occasionally, when chestnutting in midwinter, I find thirty or forty nuts in a pile, left in its gallery, just under the leaves, by the common wood mouse (*Mus leucopus*).

But especially, in the winter, the extent to which this transportation and planting of nuts is carried on is made apparent by the snow. In almost every wood, you will see where the red or gray squirrels have pawed down through the snow in a hundred places, sometimes two feet deep, and almost always directly to a nut or a pine cone, as directly as if they had started from it and bored upward, — which you and I could not have done. It would be difficult for us to find one before the snow falls. Commonly, no doubt, they had deposited them there in the fall. You wonder if they remember the localities, or discover them by the scent. The red squirrel commonly has its winter abode in the earth under a thicket of evergreens, frequently under a small clump of evergreens in the midst of a deciduous wood. If there are any nut trees which still retain their nuts standing at a distance without the wood, their paths often lead

directly to and from them. We therefore need not suppose an oak standing here and there *in* the wood in order to seed it, but if a few stand within twenty or thirty rods of it, it is sufficient.

I think that I may venture to say that every white pine cone that falls to the earth naturally in this town, before opening and losing its seeds, and almost every pitch pine one that falls at all, is cut off by a squirrel, and they begin to pluck them long before they are ripe, so that when the crop of white pine cones is a small one, as it commonly is, they cut off thus almost every one of these before it fairly ripens. I think, moreover, that their design, if I may so speak, in cutting them off green, is, partly, to prevent their opening and losing their seeds, for these are the ones for which they dig through the snow, and the only white pine cones which contain anything then. I have counted in one heap, within a diameter of four feet, the cores of 239 pitch pine cones which had been cut off and stripped by the red squirrel the previous winter.

The nuts thus left on the surface, or buried just beneath it, are placed in the most favorable circumstances for germinating. I have sometimes wondered how those which merely fell on the surface of the earth got planted; but, by the end of December, I find the chestnut of the same year partially mixed with the mould, as it were, under the decaying and mouldy leaves, where there is all the moisture and manure they want, for the nuts fall fast. In a plentiful year, a large proportion of the nuts are thus covered loosely an inch deep, and are, of course, somewhat concealed from squirrels. One win-

ter, when the crop had been abundant, I got, with the aid of a rake, many quarts of these nuts as late as the tenth of January, and though some bought at the store the same day were more than half of them mouldy, I did not find a single mouldy one among these which I picked from under the wet and mouldy leaves, where they had been snowed on once or twice. Nature knows how to pack them best. They were still plump and tender. Apparently, they do not heat there, though wet. In the spring they were all sprouting.

Loudon says that "when the nut [of the common walnut of Europe] is to be preserved through the winter for the purpose of planting in the following spring, it should be laid in a rot-heap, as soon as gathered, with the husk on, and the heap should be turned over frequently in the course of the winter."

Here, again, he is stealing Nature's "thunder." How can a poor mortal do otherwise? for it is she that finds fingers to steal with, and the treasure to be stolen. In the planting of the seeds of most trees, the best gardeners do no more than follow Nature, though they may not know it. Generally, both large and small ones are most sure to germinate, and succeed best, when only beaten into the earth with the back of a spade, and then covered with leaves or straw. These results to which planters have arrived remind us of the experience of Kane and his companions at the north, who, when learning to live in that climate, were surprised to find themselves steadily adopting the customs of the natives, simply becoming Esquimaux. So, when we experiment in planting forests, we find ourselves at last doing as Nature does.

Would it not be well to consult with Nature in the outset? for she is the most extensive and experienced planter of us all, not excepting the Dukes of Athol.

In short, they who have not attended particularly to this subject are but little aware to what an extent quadrupeds and birds are employed, especially in the fall, in collecting, and so disseminating and planting, the seeds of trees. It is the almost constant employment of the squirrels at that season, and you rarely meet with one that has not a nut in its mouth, or is not just going to get one. One squirrel-hunter of this town told me that he knew of a walnut tree which bore particularly good nuts, but that on going to gather them one fall, he found that he had been anticipated by a family of a dozen red squirrels. He took out of the tree, which was hollow, one bushel and three pecks by measurement, without the husks, and they supplied him and his family for the winter. It would be easy to multiply instances of this kind. How commonly in the fall you see the cheek-pouches of the striped squirrel distended by a quantity of nuts! This species gets its scientific name, *Tamias*, or the steward, from its habit of storing up nuts and other seeds. Look under a nut tree a month after the nuts have fallen, and see what proportion of sound nuts to the abortive ones and shells you will find ordinarily. They have been already eaten, or dispersed far and wide. The ground looks like a platform before a grocery, where the gossips of the village sit to crack nuts and less savory jokes. You have come, you would say, after the feast was over, and are presented with the shells only.

Occasionally, when threading the woods in the fall, you will hear a sound as if some one had broken a twig, and, looking up, see a jay pecking at an acorn, or you will see a flock of them at once about it, in the top of an oak, and hear them break them off. They then fly to a suitable limb, and placing the acorn under one foot, hammer away at it busily, making a sound like a woodpecker's tapping, looking round from time to time to see if any foe is approaching, and soon reach the meat, and nibble at it, holding up their heads to swallow, while they hold the remainder very firmly with their claws. Nevertheless it often drops to the ground before the bird has done with it. I can confirm what William Bartram wrote to Wilson, the ornithologist, that "the jay is one of the most useful agents in the economy of nature, for disseminating forest trees and other nuciferous and hard-seeded vegetables on which they feed. Their chief employment during the autumnal season is foraging to supply their winter stores. In performing this necessary duty they drop abundance of seed in their flight over fields, hedges, and by fences, where they alight to deposit them in the post-holes, etc. It is remarkable what numbers of young trees rise up in fields and pastures after a wet winter and spring. These birds alone are capable, in a few years' time, to replant all the cleared lands."

I have noticed that squirrels also frequently drop their nuts in open land, which will still further account for the oaks and walnuts which spring up in pastures, for, depend on it, every new tree comes from a seed. When I examine the little oaks, one or two years old, in such

places, I invariably find the empty acorn from which they sprung.

So far from the seed having lain dormant in the soil since oaks grew there before, as many believe, it is well known that it is difficult to preserve the vitality of acorns long enough to transport them to Europe; and it is recommended in Loudon's "Arboretum," as the safest course, to sprout them in pots on the voyage. The same authority states that "very few acorns of any species will germinate after having been kept a year," that beech mast "only retains its vital properties one year," and the black walnut "seldom more than six months after it has ripened." I have frequently found that in November almost every acorn left on the ground had sprouted or decayed. What with frost, drouth, moisture, and worms, the greater part are soon destroyed. Yet it is stated by one botanical writer that "acorns that have lain for centuries, on being ploughed up, have soon vegetated."

Mr. George B. Emerson, in his valuable Report on the Trees and Shrubs of this State, says of the pines: "The tenacity of life of the seeds is remarkable. They will remain for many years unchanged in the ground, protected by the coolness and deep shade of the forest above them. But when the forest is removed, and the warmth of the sun admitted, they immediately vegetate." Since he does not tell us on what observation his remark is founded, I must doubt its truth. Besides, the experience of nursery-men makes it the more questionable.

The stories of wheat raised from seed buried with an ancient Egyptian, and of raspberries raised from seed found in the stomach of a man in England, who is sup-

posed to have died sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago, are generally discredited, simply because the evidence is not conclusive.

Several men of science, Dr. Carpenter among them, have used the statement that beach plums sprang up in sand which was dug up forty miles inland in Maine, to prove that the seed had lain there a very long time, and some have inferred that the coast has receded so far. But it seems to me necessary to their argument to show, first, that beach plums grow only on a beach. They are not uncommon here, which is about half that distance from the shore; and I remember a dense patch a few miles north of us, twenty-five miles inland, from which the fruit was annually carried to market. How much further inland they grow, I know not. Dr. Charles T. Jackson speaks of finding "beach plums" (perhaps they were this kind) more than one hundred miles inland in Maine.

It chances that similar objections lie against all the more notorious instances of the kind on record.

Yet I am prepared to believe that some seeds, especially small ones, may retain their vitality for centuries under favorable circumstances. In the spring of 1859, the old Hunt house, so called, in this town, whose chimney bore the date 1703, was taken down. This stood on land which belonged to John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, and a part of the house was evidently much older than the above date, and belonged to the Winthrop family. For many years I have ransacked this neighborhood for plants, and I consider myself familiar with its productions. Thinking of the seeds

which are said to be sometimes dug up at an unusual depth in the earth, and thus to reproduce long extinct plants, it occurred to me last fall that some new or rare plants might have sprung up in the cellar of this house, which had been covered from the light so long. Searching there on the 22d of September, I found, among other rank weeds, a species of nettle (*Urtica urens*) which I had not found before; dill, which I had not seen growing spontaneously; the Jerusalem oak (*Chenopodium Botrys*), which I had seen wild in but one place; black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), which is quite rare hereabouts, and common tobacco, which, though it was often cultivated here in the last century, has for fifty years been an unknown plant in this town, and a few months before this not even I had heard that one man, in the north part of the town, was cultivating a few plants for his own use. I have no doubt that some or all of these plants sprang from seeds which had long been buried under or about that house, and that that tobacco is an additional evidence that the plant was formerly cultivated here. The cellar has been filled up this year, and four of those plants, including the tobacco, are now again extinct in that locality.

It is true, I have shown that the animals consume a great part of the seeds of trees, and so, at least, effectually prevent their becoming trees; but in all these cases, as I have said, the consumer is compelled to be at the same time the disperser and planter, and this is the tax which he pays to Nature. I think it is Linnæus who says that while the swine is rooting for acorns he is planting acorns.

Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed, — a, to me, equally mysterious origin for it. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders. I shall even believe that the millennium is at hand, and that the reign of justice is about to commence, when the Patent Office, or Government, begins to distribute, and the people to plant, the seeds of these things.

In the spring of 1857 I planted six seeds sent to me from the Patent Office, and labeled, I think, *Poitrine jaune grosse*, large yellow squash. Two came up, and one bore a squash which weighed $123\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, the other bore four, weighing together $186\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. Who would have believed that there was 310 pounds of *poitrine jaune grosse* in that corner of my garden? These seeds were the bait I used to catch it, my ferrets which I sent into its burrow, my brace of terriers which unearthed it. A little mysterious hoeing and manuring was all the *abracadabra presto-change* that I used, and lo! true to the label, they found for me 310 pounds of *poitrine jaune grosse* there, where it never was known to be, nor was before. These talismans had perchance sprung from America at first, and returned to it with unabated force. The big squash took a premium at your fair that fall, and I understood that the man who bought it, intended to sell the seeds for ten cents apiece. (Were they not cheap at that?) But I have more hounds of the same breed. I learn that one which I despatched to a distant town, true to its instincts, points to the large yellow squash there, too, where no hound ever found it before, as its ancestors did here and in France.

Other seeds I have which will find other things in that corner of my garden, in like fashion, almost any fruit you wish, every year for ages, until the crop more than fills the whole garden. You have but little more to do than throw up your cap for entertainment these American days. Perfect alchemists I keep who can transmute substances without end, and thus the corner of my garden is an inexhaustible treasure-chest. Here you can dig, not gold, but the value which gold merely represents; and there is no Signor Blitz about it. Yet farmers' sons will stare by the hour to see a juggler draw ribbons from his throat, though he tells them it is all deception. Surely, men love darkness rather than light.

WALKING

I WISH to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness, as contrasted with a freedom and culture merely civil, — to regard man as an inhabitant, or a part and parcel of Nature, rather than a member of society. I wish to make an extreme statement, if so I may make an emphatic one, for there are enough champions of civilization: the minister and the school committee and every one of you will take care of that.

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks, — who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*, which word is beautifully derived “from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretense of going *à la Sainte Terre*,” to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, “There goes a *Sainte-Terrer*,” a Saunterer, a Holy-Lander. They who never go to the Holy Land in their walks, as they pretend, are indeed mere idlers and vagabonds; but they who do go there are saunterers in the good sense, such as I mean. Some, however, would derive the word from *sans terre*, without land or a home, which, therefore, in the good sense, will mean, having no particular home, but equally at home everywhere. For this is the secret of successful sauntering. He who sits still in a house all the time may be the greatest vagrant of all; but the saunterer, in the good sense, is no more

vagrant than the meandering river, which is all the while sedulously seeking the shortest course to the sea. But I prefer the first, which, indeed, is the most probable derivation. For every walk is a sort of crusade, preached by some Peter the Hermit in us, to go forth and reconquer this Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels.

It is true, we are but faint-hearted crusaders, even the walkers, nowadays, who undertake no persevering, never-ending enterprises. Our expeditions are but tours, and come round again at evening to the old hearth-side from which we set out. Half the walk is but retracing our steps. We should go forth on the shortest walk, perchance, in the spirit of undying adventure, never to return, — prepared to send back our embalmed hearts only as relics to our desolate kingdoms. If you are ready to leave father and mother, and brother and sister, and wife and child and friends, and never see them again, — if you have paid your debts, and made your will, and settled all your affairs, and are a free man, then you are ready for a walk.

To come down to my own experience, my companion and I, for I sometimes have a companion, take pleasure in fancying ourselves knights of a new, or rather an old, order, — not Equestrians or Chevaliers, not Ritters or Riders, but Walkers, a still more ancient and honorable class, I trust. The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker, — not the Knight, but Walker, Errant. He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People.

We have felt that we almost alone hereabouts prac-

ticed this noble art; though, to tell the truth, at least if their own assertions are to be received, most of my townsmen would fain walk sometimes, as I do, but they cannot. No wealth can buy the requisite leisure, freedom, and independence which are the capital in this profession. It comes only by the grace of God. It requires a direct dispensation from Heaven to become a walker. You must be born into the family of the Walkers. *Ambulator nascitur, non fit*. Some of my townsmen, it is true, can remember and have described to me some walks which they took ten years ago, in which they were so blessed as to lose themselves for half an hour in the woods; but I know very well that they have confined themselves to the highway ever since, whatever pretensions they may make to belong to this select class. No doubt they were elevated for a moment as by the reminiscence of a previous state of existence, when even they were foresters and outlaws.

“When he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small
Of byrdes mery syngynge.

“It is ferre gone, sayd Robyn,
That I was last here;
Me lyste a lytell for to shote
At the donne dere.”

I think that I cannot preserve my health and spirits, unless I spend four hours a day at least — and it is commonly more than that — sauntering through the woods and over the hills and fields, absolutely free from all worldly engagements. You may safely say, A penny

for your thoughts, or a thousand pounds. When sometimes I am reminded that the mechanics and shopkeepers stay in their shops not only all the forenoon, but all the afternoon too, sitting with crossed legs, so many of them, — as if the legs were made to sit upon, and not to stand or walk upon, — I think that they deserve some credit for not having all committed suicide long ago.

I, who cannot stay in my chamber for a single day without acquiring some rust, and when sometimes I have stolen forth for a walk at the eleventh hour, or four o'clock in the afternoon, too late to redeem the day, when the shades of night were already beginning to be mingled with the daylight, have felt as if I had committed some sin to be atoned for, — I confess that I am astonished at the power of endurance, to say nothing of the moral insensibility, of my neighbors who confine themselves to shops and offices the whole day for weeks and months, aye, and years almost together. I know not what manner of stuff they are of, — sitting there now at three o'clock in the afternoon, as if it were three o'clock in the morning. Bonaparte may talk of the three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, but it is nothing to the courage which can sit down cheerfully at this hour in the afternoon over against one's self whom you have known all the morning, to starve out a garrison to whom you are bound by such strong ties of sympathy. I wonder that about this time, or say between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, too late for the morning papers and too early for the evening ones, there is not a general explosion heard

up and down the street, scattering a legion of antiquated and house-bred notions and whims to the four winds for an airing, — and so the evil cure itself.

How womankind, who are confined to the house still more than men, stand it I do not know; but I have ground to suspect that most of them do not *stand* it at all. When, early in a summer afternoon, we have been shaking the dust of the village from the skirts of our garments, making haste past those houses with purely Doric or Gothic fronts, which have such an air of repose about them, my companion whispers that probably about these times their occupants are all gone to bed. Then it is that I appreciate the beauty and the glory of architecture, which itself never turns in, but forever stands out and erect, keeping watch over the slumberers.

No doubt temperament, and, above all, age, have a good deal to do with it. As a man grows older, his ability to sit still and follow indoor occupations increases. He grows vespertinal in his habits as the evening of life approaches, till at last he comes forth only just before sundown, and gets all the walk that he requires in half an hour.

But the walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise, as it is called, as the sick take medicine at stated hours, — as the swinging of dumbbells or chairs; but is itself the enterprise and adventure of the day. If you would get exercise, go in search of the springs of life. Think of a man's swinging dumbbells for his health, when those springs are bubbling up in far-off pastures unsought by him!

Moreover, you must walk like a camel, which is said to be the only beast which ruminates when walking. When a traveler asked Wordsworth's servant to show him her master's study, she answered, "Here is his library, but his study is out of doors."

Living much out of doors, in the sun and wind, will no doubt produce a certain roughness of character, — will cause a thicker cuticle to grow over some of the finer qualities of our nature, as on the face and hands, or as severe manual labor robs the hands of some of their delicacy of touch. So staying in the house, on the other hand, may produce a softness and smoothness, not to say thinness of skin, accompanied by an increased sensibility to certain impressions. Perhaps we should be more susceptible to some influences important to our intellectual and moral growth, if the sun had shone and the wind blown on us a little less; and no doubt it is a nice matter to proportion rightly the thick and thin skin. But methinks that is a scurf that will fall off fast enough, — that the natural remedy is to be found in the proportion which the night bears to the day, the winter to the summer, thought to experience. There will be so much the more air and sunshine in our thoughts. The callous palms of the laborer are conversant with finer tissues of self-respect and heroism, whose touch thrills the heart, than the languid fingers of idleness. That is mere sentimentality that lies abed by day and thinks itself white, far from the tan and callus of experience.

When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only

in a garden or a mall? Even some sects of philosophers have felt the necessity of importing the woods to themselves, since they did not go to the woods. "They planted groves and walks of Platanes," where they took *subdiales ambulationes* in porticos open to the air. Of course it is of no use to direct our steps to the woods, if they do not carry us thither. I am alarmed when it happens that I have walked a mile into the woods bodily, without getting there in spirit. In my afternoon walk I would fain forget all my morning occupations and my obligations to society. But it sometimes happens that I cannot easily shake off the village. The thought of some work will run in my head and I am not where my body is, — I am out of my senses. In my walks I would fain return to my senses. What business have I in the woods, if I am thinking of something out of the woods? I suspect myself, and cannot help a shudder, when I find myself so implicated even in what are called good works, — for this may sometimes happen.

My vicinity affords many good walks; and though for so many years I have walked almost every day, and sometimes for several days together, I have not yet exhausted them. An absolutely new prospect is a great happiness, and I can still get this any afternoon. Two or three hours' walking will carry me to as strange a country as I expect ever to see. A single farmhouse which I had not seen before is sometimes as good as the dominions of the King of Dahomey. There is in fact a sort of harmony discoverable between the capabilities of the landscape within a circle of ten miles' radius, or the limits of an afternoon walk, and the threescore

years and ten of human life. It will never become quite familiar to you.

Nowadays almost all man's improvements, so called, as the building of houses and the cutting down of the forest and of all large trees, simply deform the landscape, and make it more and more tame and cheap. A people who would begin by burning the fences and let the forest stand! I saw the fences half consumed, their ends lost in the middle of the prairie, and some worldly miser with a surveyor looking after his bounds, while heaven had taken place around him, and he did not see the angels going to and fro, but was looking for an old post-hole in the midst of paradise. I looked again, and saw him standing in the middle of a boggy Stygian fen, surrounded by devils, and he had found his bounds without a doubt, three little stones, where a stake had been driven, and looking nearer, I saw that the Prince of Darkness was his surveyor.

I can easily walk ten, fifteen, twenty, any number of miles, commencing at my own door, without going by any house, without crossing a road except where the fox and the mink do: first along by the river, and then the brook, and then the meadow and the woodside. There are square miles in my vicinity which have no inhabitant. From many a hill I can see civilization and the abodes of man afar. The farmers and their works are scarcely more obvious than woodchucks and their burrows. Man and his affairs, church and state and school, trade and commerce, and manufactures and agriculture, even politics, the most alarming of them all, — I am pleased to see how little space they occupy

in the landscape. Politics is but a narrow field, and that still narrower highway yonder leads to it. I sometimes direct the traveler thither. If you would go to the political world, follow the great road, — follow that market-man, keep his dust in your eyes, and it will lead you straight to it; for it, too, has its place merely, and does not occupy all space. I pass from it as from a bean-field into the forest, and it is forgotten. In one half-hour I can walk off to some portion of the earth's surface where a man does not stand from one year's end to another, and there, consequently, politics are not, for they are but as the cigar-smoke of a man.

The village is the place to which the roads tend, a sort of expansion of the highway, as a lake of a river. It is the body of which roads are the arms and legs, — a trivial or quadrivial place, the thoroughfare and ordinary of travelers. The word is from the Latin *villa*, which together with *via*, a way, or more anciently *ved* and *vella*, Varro derives from *veho*, to carry, because the villa is the place to and from which things are carried. They who got their living by teaming were said *vellaturam facere*. Hence, too, the Latin word *vilis* and our vile, also *villain*. This suggests what kind of degeneracy villagers are liable to. They are wayworn by the travel that goes by and over them, without traveling themselves.

Some do not walk at all; others walk in the highways; a few walk across lots. Roads are made for horses and men of business. I do not travel in them much, comparatively, because I am not in a hurry to get to any tavern or grocery or livery-stable or depot to which

they lead. I am a good horse to travel, but not from choice a roadster. The landscape-painter uses the figures of men to mark a road. He would not make that use of my figure. I walk out into a nature such as the old prophets and poets, Menu, Moses, Homer, Chaucer, walked in. You may name it America, but it is not America; neither Americus Vespucius, nor Columbus, nor the rest were the discoverers of it. There is a truer account of it in mythology than in any history of America, so called, that I have seen.

However, there are a few old roads that may be trodden with profit, as if they led somewhere now that they are nearly discontinued. There is the Old Marlborough Road, which does not go to Marlborough now, methinks, unless that is Marlborough where it carries me. I am the bolder to speak of it here, because I presume that there are one or two such roads in every town.

THE OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

Where they once dug for money,
But never found any;
Where sometimes Martial Miles
Singly files,
And Elijah Wood,
I fear for no good:
No other man,
Save Elisha Dugan, —
O man of wild habits,
Partridges and rabbits,
Who hast no cares
Only to set snares,
Who liv'st all alone,
Close to the bone,

And where life is sweetest
Constantly eatest.
When the spring stirs my blood
With the instinct to travel,
I can get enough gravel
On the Old Marlborough Road.
Nobody repairs it,
For nobody wears it;
It is a living way,
As the Christians say.
Not many there be
Who enter therein,
Only the guests of the
Irishman Quin.
What is it, what is it,
But a direction out there,
And the bare possibility
Of going somewhere?
Great guide-boards of stone,
But travelers none;
Cenotaphs of the towns
Named on their crowns.
It is worth going to see
Where you *might* be.
What king
Did the thing,
I am still wondering;
Set up how or when,
By what selectmen,
Gourgas or Lee,
Clark or Darby?
They 're a great endeavor
To be something forever;
Blank tablets of stone,
Where a traveler might groan,
And in one sentence
Grave all that is known;
Which another might read,
In his extreme need.

I know one or two
Lines that would do,
Literature that might stand
All over the land,
Which a man could remember
Till next December,
And read again in the spring,
After the thawing.
If with fancy unfurled
You leave your abode,
You may go round the world
By the Old Marlborough Road.

At present, in this vicinity, the best part of the land is not private property; the landscape is not owned, and the walker enjoys comparative freedom. But possibly the day will come when it will be partitioned off into so-called pleasure-grounds, in which a few will take a narrow and exclusive pleasure only,—when fences shall be multiplied, and man-traps and other engines invented to confine men to the *public* road, and walking over the surface of God's earth shall be construed to mean trespassing on some gentleman's grounds. To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it. Let us improve our opportunities, then, before the evil days come.

What is it that makes it so hard sometimes to determine whither we will walk? I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. It is not indifferent to us which way we walk. There is a right way; but we are very liable from heedlessness and stupidity to take the wrong one. We would fain take that walk, never yet

taken by us through this actual world, which is perfectly symbolical of the path which we love to travel in the interior and ideal world; and sometimes, no doubt, we find it difficult to choose our direction, because it does not yet exist distinctly in our idea.

When I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle, — varies a few degrees, and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun. I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for a thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of

enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact, if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe. And that way the nation is moving, and I may say that mankind progress from east to west. Within a few years we have witnessed the phenomenon of a southeastward migration, in the settlement of Australia; but this affects us as a retrograde movement, and, judging from the moral and physical character of the first generation of Australians, has not yet proved a successful experiment. The eastern Tartars think that there is nothing west beyond Thibet. "The world ends there," say they; "beyond there is nothing but a shoreless sea." It is unmitigated East where they live.

We go eastward to realize history and study the works of art and literature, retracing the steps of the race; we go westward as into the future, with a spirit of enterprise and adventure. The Atlantic is a Lethean stream, in our passage over which we have had an opportunity to forget the Old World and its institutions. If we do not succeed this time, there is perhaps one more chance for the race left before it arrives on the banks of the Styx; and that is in the Lethe of the Pacific, which is three times as wide.

I know not how significant it is, or how far it is an evidence of singularity, that an individual should thus consent in his pettiest walk with the general movement

of the race; but I know that something akin to the migratory instinct in birds and quadrupeds, — which, in some instances, is known to have affected the squirrel tribe, impelling them to a general and mysterious movement, in which they were seen, say some, crossing the broadest rivers, each on its particular chip, with its tail raised for a sail, and bridging narrower streams with their dead, — that something like the *furor* which affects the domestic cattle in the spring, and which is referred to a worm in their tails, affects both nations and individuals, either perennially or from time to time. Not a flock of wild geese cackles over our town, but it to some extent unsettles the value of real estate here, and, if I were a broker, I should probably take that disturbance into account.

“Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strange strondes.”

Every sunset which I witness inspires me with the desire to go to a West as distant and as fair as that into which the sun goes down. He appears to migrate westward daily, and tempt us to follow him. He is the Great Western Pioneer whom the nations follow. We dream all night of those mountain-ridges in the horizon, though they may be of vapor only, which were last gilded by his rays. The island of Atlantis, and the islands and gardens of the Hesperides, a sort of terrestrial paradise, appear to have been the Great West of the ancients, enveloped in mystery and poetry. Who has not seen in imagination, when looking into the sunset sky, the gardens of the Hesperides, and the foundation of all those fables?

Columbus felt the westward tendency more strongly

than any before. He obeyed it, and found a New World for Castile and Leon. The herd of men in those days scented fresh pastures from afar.

“And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay;
At last *he* rose, and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

Where on the globe can there be found an area of equal extent with that occupied by the bulk of our States, so fertile and so rich and varied in its productions, and at the same time so habitable by the European, as this is? Michaux, who knew but part of them, says that “the species of large trees are much more numerous in North America than in Europe; in the United States there are more than one hundred and forty species that exceed thirty feet in height; in France there are but thirty that attain this size.” Later botanists more than confirm his observations. Humboldt came to America to realize his youthful dreams of a tropical vegetation, and he beheld it in its greatest perfection in the primitive forests of the Amazon, the most gigantic wilderness on the earth, which he has so eloquently described. The geographer Guyot, himself a European, goes farther, — farther than I am ready to follow him; yet not when he says: “As the plant is made for the animal, as the vegetable world is made for the animal world, America is made for the man of the Old World. . . . The man of the Old World sets out upon his way. Leaving the highlands of Asia, he descends from station to station towards Europe. Each of his steps is marked by a new civilization superior to the

preceding, by a greater power of development. Arrived at the Atlantic, he pauses on the shore of this unknown ocean, the bounds of which he knows not, and turns upon his footprints for an instant." When he has exhausted the rich soil of Europe, and reinvigorated himself, "then recommences his adventurous career westward as in the earliest ages." So far Guyot.

From this western impulse coming in contact with the barrier of the Atlantic sprang the commerce and enterprise of modern times. The younger Michaux, in his "Travels West of the Alleghanies in 1802," says that the common inquiry in the newly settled West was, "'From what part of the world have you come?' As if these vast and fertile regions would naturally be the place of meeting and common country of all the inhabitants of the globe."

To use an obsolete Latin word, I might say, *Ex Oriente lux; ex Occidente FRUX*. From the East light; from the West fruit.

Sir Francis Head, an English traveler and a Governor-General of Canada, tells us that "in both the northern and southern hemispheres of the New World, Nature has not only outlined her works on a larger scale, but has painted the whole picture with brighter and more costly colors than she used in delineating and in beautifying the Old World. . . . The heavens of America appear infinitely higher, the sky is bluer, the air is fresher, the cold is intenser, the moon looks larger, the stars are brighter, the thunder is louder, the lightning is vivid, the wind is stronger, the rain is heavier, the mountains are higher, the rivers longer, the forests bigger, the plains

broader.” This statement will do at least to set against Buffon’s account of this part of the world and its productions.

Linnæus said long ago, “Nescio quae facies *laeta, glabra* plantis Americanis” (I know not what there is of joyous and smooth in the aspect of American plants); and I think that in this country there are no, or at most very few, *Africanae bestiae*, African beasts, as the Romans called them, and that in this respect also it is peculiarly fitted for the habitation of man. We are told that within three miles of the centre of the East-Indian city of Singapore, some of the inhabitants are annually carried off by tigers; but the traveler can lie down in the woods at night almost anywhere in North America without fear of wild beasts.

These are encouraging testimonies. If the moon looks larger here than in Europe, probably the sun looks larger also. If the heavens of America appear infinitely higher, and the stars brighter, I trust that these facts are symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man, — as there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life? I trust that we shall be more imaginative, that our thoughts will be clearer, fresher, and more ethereal,

as our sky, — our understanding more comprehensive and broader, like our plains, — our intellect generally on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and mountains and forests, — and our hearts shall even correspond in breadth and depth and grandeur to our inland seas. Perchance there will appear to the traveler something, he knows not what, of *laeta* and *glabra*, of joyous and serene, in our very faces. Else to what end does the world go on, and why was America discovered?

To Americans I hardly need to say, —

“Westward the star of empire takes its way.”

As a true patriot, I should be ashamed to think that Adam in paradise was more favorably situated on the whole than the backwoodsman in this country.

Our sympathies in Massachusetts are not confined to New England; though we may be estranged from the South, we sympathize with the West. There is the home of the younger sons, as among the Scandinavians they took to the sea for their inheritance. It is too late to be studying Hebrew; it is more important to understand even the slang of to-day.

Some months ago I went to see a panorama of the Rhine. It was like a dream of the Middle Ages. I floated down its historic stream in something more than imagination, under bridges built by the Romans, and repaired by later heroes, past cities and castles whose very names were music to my ears, and each of which was the subject of a legend. There were Ehrenbreitstein and Rolandseck and Coblentz, which I knew only in

history. They were ruins that interested me chiefly. There seemed to come up from its waters and its vine-clad hills and valleys a hushed music as of Crusaders departing for the Holy Land. I floated along under the spell of enchantment, as if I had been transported to an heroic age, and breathed an atmosphere of chivalry.

Soon after, I went to see a panorama of the Mississippi, and as I worked my way up the river in the light of to-day, and saw the steamboats wooding up, counted the rising cities, gazed on the fresh ruins of Nauvoo, beheld the Indians moving west across the stream, and, as before I had looked up the Moselle, now looked up the Ohio and the Missouri and heard the legends of Dubuque and of Wenona's Cliff, — still thinking more of the future than of the past or present, — I saw that this was a Rhine stream of a different kind; that the foundations of castles were yet to be laid, and the famous bridges were yet to be thrown over the river; and I felt that *this was the heroic age itself*, though we know it not, for the hero is commonly the simplest and obscurest of men.

The West of which I speak is but another name for the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the World. Every tree sends its fibres forth in search of the Wild. The cities import it at any price. Men plow and sail for it. From the forest and wilderness come the tonics and barks which brace mankind. Our ancestors were savages. The story of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf is not a meaningless fable. The founders of every state which has risen to eminence have drawn

their nourishment and vigor from a similar wild source. It was because the children of the Empire were not suckled by the wolf that they were conquered and displaced by the children of the northern forests who were.

I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows. We require an infusion of hemlock spruce or *arbor-vitæ* in our tea. There is a difference between eating and drinking for strength and from mere gluttony. The Hottentots eagerly devour the marrow of the koodoo and other antelopes raw, as a matter of course. Some of our northern Indians eat raw the marrow of the Arctic reindeer, as well as various other parts, including the summits of the antlers, as long as they are soft. And herein, perchance, they have stolen a march on the cooks of Paris. They get what usually goes to feed the fire. This is probably better than stall-fed beef and slaughter-house pork to make a man of. Give me a wildness whose glance no civilization can endure, — as if we lived on the marrow of koodoos devoured raw.

There are some intervals which border the strain of the wood thrush, to which I would migrate, — wild lands where no settler has squatted; to which, methinks, I am already acclimated.

The African hunter Cumming tells us that the skin of the eland, as well as that of most other antelopes just killed, emits the most delicious perfume of trees and grass. I would have every man so much like a wild antelope, so much a part and parcel of nature, that his very person should thus sweetly advertise our senses of his presence, and remind us of those parts of nature which

he most haunts. I feel no disposition to be satirical, when the trapper's coat emits the odor of musquash even; it is a sweeter scent to me than that which commonly exhales from the merchant's or the scholar's garments. When I go into their wardrobes and handle their vestments, I am reminded of no grassy plains and flowery meads which they have frequented, but of dusty merchants' exchanges and libraries rather.

A tanned skin is something more than respectable, and perhaps olive is a fitter color than white for a man, — a denizen of the woods. "The pale white man!" I do not wonder that the African pitied him. Darwin the naturalist says, "A white man bathing by the side of a Tahitian was like a plant bleached by the gardener's art, compared with a fine, dark green one, growing vigorously in the open fields."

Ben Jonson exclaims, —

"How near to good is what is fair!"

So I would say, —

How near to good is what is *wild*!

Life consists with wildness. The most alive is the wildest. Not yet subdued to man, its presence refreshes him. One who pressed forward incessantly and never rested from his labors, who grew fast and made infinite demands on life, would always find himself in a new country or wilderness, and surrounded by the raw material of life. He would be climbing over the prostrate stems of primitive forest-trees.

Hope and the future for me are not in lawns and cultivated fields, not in towns and cities, but in the imper-

vious and quaking swamps. When, formerly, I have analyzed my partiality for some farm which I had contemplated purchasing, I have frequently found that I was attracted solely by a few square rods of impermeable and unfathomable bog, — a natural sink in one corner of it. That was the jewel which dazzled me. I derive more of my subsistence from the swamps which surround my native town than from the cultivated gardens in the village. There are no richer parterres to my eyes than the dense beds of dwarf andromeda (*Cassandra calyculata*) which cover these tender places on the earth's surface. Botany cannot go farther than tell me the names of the shrubs which grow there, — the high blueberry, paniced andromeda, lambkill, azalea, and rhodora, — all standing in the quaking sphagnum. I often think that I should like to have my house front on this mass of dull red bushes, omitting other flower plots and borders, transplanted spruce and trim box, even graveled walks, — to have this fertile spot under my windows, not a few imported barrowfuls of soil only to cover the sand which was thrown out in digging the cellar. Why not put my house, my parlor, behind this plot, instead of behind that meagre assemblage of curiosities, that poor apology for a Nature and Art, which I call my front yard? It is an effort to clear up and make a decent appearance when the carpenter and mason have departed, though done as much for the passer-by as the dweller within. The most tasteful front-yard fence was never an agreeable object of study to me; the most elaborate ornaments, acorn tops, or what not, soon wearied and disgusted me. Bring your sills up to the

very edge of the swamp, then (though it may not be the best place for a dry cellar), so that there be no access on that side to citizens. Front yards are not made to walk in, but, at most, through, and you could go in the back way.

Yes, though you may think me perverse, if it were proposed to me to dwell in the neighborhood of the most beautiful garden that ever human art contrived, or else of a Dismal Swamp, I should certainly decide for the swamp. How vain, then, have been all your labors, citizens, for me!

My spirits infallibly rise in proportion to the outward dreariness. Give me the ocean, the desert, or the wilderness! In the desert, pure air and solitude compensate for want of moisture and fertility. The traveler Burton says of it: "Your *morale* improves; you become frank and cordial, hospitable and single-minded. . . . In the desert, spirituous liquors excite only disgust. There is a keen enjoyment in a mere animal existence." They who have been traveling long on the steppes of Tartary say, "On reëntering cultivated lands, the agitation, perplexity, and turmoil of civilization oppressed and suffocated us; the air seemed to fail us, and we felt every moment as if about to die of asphyxia." When I would recreate myself, I seek the darkest wood, the thickest and most interminable and, to the citizen, most dismal, swamp. I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a *sanctum sanctorum*. There is the strength, the marrow, of Nature. The wildwood covers the virgin mould, and the same soil is good for men and for trees. A man's health requires as many acres of meadow to his prospect as his

farm does loads of muck. There are the strong meats on which he feeds. A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it. A township where one primitive forest waves above while another primitive forest rots below, — such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes, but poets and philosophers for the coming ages. In such a soil grew Homer and Confucius and the rest, and out of such a wilderness comes the Reformer eating locusts and wild honey.

To preserve wild animals implies generally the creation of a forest for them to dwell in or resort to. So it is with man. A hundred years ago they sold bark in our streets peeled from our own woods. In the very aspect of those primitive and rugged trees there was, methinks, a tanning principle which hardened and consolidated the fibres of men's thoughts. Ah! already I shudder for these comparatively degenerate days of my native village, when you cannot collect a load of bark of good thickness, and we no longer produce tar and turpentine.

The civilized nations — Greece, Rome, England — have been sustained by the primitive forests which anciently rotted where they stand. They survive as long as the soil is not exhausted. Alas for human culture! little is to be expected of a nation, when the vegetable mould is exhausted, and it is compelled to make manure of the bones of its fathers. There the poet sustains himself merely by his own superfluous fat, and the philosopher comes down on his marrow-bones.

It is said to be the task of the American "to work

the virgin soil," and that "agriculture here already assumes proportions unknown everywhere else." I think that the farmer displaces the Indian even because he redeems the meadow, and so makes himself stronger and in some respects more natural. I was surveying for a man the other day a single straight line one hundred and thirty-two rods long, through a swamp at whose entrance might have been written the words which Dante read over the entrance to the infernal regions, "Leave all hope, ye that enter," — that is, of ever getting out again; where at one time I saw my employer actually up to his neck and swimming for his life in his property, though it was still winter. He had another similar swamp which I could not survey at all, because it was completely under water, and nevertheless, with regard to a third swamp, which I did *survey* from a distance, he remarked to me, true to his instincts, that he would not part with it for any consideration, on account of the mud which it contained. And that man intends to put a girdling ditch round the whole in the course of forty months, and so redeem it by the magic of his spade. I refer to him only as the type of a class.

The weapons with which we have gained our most important victories, which should be handed down as heirlooms from father to son, are not the sword and the lance, but the bushwhack, the turf-cutter, the spade, and the bog hoe, rusted with the blood of many a meadow, and begrimed with the dust of many a hard-fought field. The very winds blew the Indian's corn-field into the meadow, and pointed out the way which

he had not the skill to follow. He had no better implement with which to intrench himself in the land than a clamshell. But the farmer is armed with plow and spade.

In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in Hamlet and the Iliad, in all the scriptures and mythologies, not learned in the schools, that delights us. As the wild duck is more swift and beautiful than the tame, so is the wild — the mallard — thought, which 'mid falling dews wings its way above the fens. A truly good book is something as natural, and as unexpectedly and unaccountably fair and perfect, as a wild-flower discovered on the prairies of the West or in the jungles of the East. Genius is a light which makes the darkness visible, like the lightning's flash, which perchance shatters the temple of knowledge itself, — and not a taper lighted at the hearth-stone of the race, which pales before the light of common day.

English literature, from the days of the minstrels to the Lake Poets, — Chaucer and Spenser and Milton, and even Shakespeare, included, — breathes no quite fresh and, in this sense, wild strain. It is an essentially tame and civilized literature, reflecting Greece and Rome. Her wilderness is a greenwood, her wild man a Robin Hood. There is plenty of genial love of Nature, but not so much of Nature herself. Her chronicles inform us when her wild animals, but not when the wild man in her, became extinct.

The science of Humboldt is one thing, poetry is an-

other thing. The poet to-day, notwithstanding all the discoveries of science, and the accumulated learning of mankind, enjoys no advantage over Homer.

Where is the literature which gives expression to Nature? He would be a poet who could impress the winds and streams into his service, to speak for him; who nailed words to their primitive senses, as farmers drive down stakes in the spring, which the frost has heaved; who derived his words as often as he used them, — transplanted them to his page with earth adhering to their roots; whose words were so true and fresh and natural that they would appear to expand like the buds at the approach of spring, though they lay half smothered between two musty leaves in a library, — aye, to bloom and bear fruit there, after their kind, annually, for the faithful reader, in sympathy with surrounding Nature.

I do not know of any poetry to quote which adequately expresses this yearning for the Wild. Approached from this side, the best poetry is tame. I do not know where to find in any literature, ancient or modern, any account which contents me of that Nature with which even I am acquainted. You will perceive that I demand something which no Augustan nor Elizabethan age, which no *culture*, in short, can give. Mythology comes nearer to it than anything. How much more fertile a Nature, at least, has Grecian mythology its root in than English literature! Mythology is the crop which the Old World bore before its soil was exhausted, before the fancy and imagination were affected with blight; and which it still bears,

wherever its pristine vigor is unabated. All other literatures endure only as the elms which overshadow our houses; but this is like the great dragon-tree of the Western Isles, as old as mankind, and, whether that does or not, will endure as long; for the decay of other literatures makes the soil in which it thrives.

The West is preparing to add its fables to those of the East. The valleys of the Ganges, the Nile, and the Rhine having yielded their crop, it remains to be seen what the valleys of the Amazon, the Plate, the Orinoco, the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi will produce. Perchance, when, in the course of ages, American liberty has become a fiction of the past, — as it is to some extent a fiction of the present, — the poets of the world will be inspired by American mythology.

The wildest dreams of wild men, even, are not the less true, though they may not recommend themselves to the sense which is most common among Englishmen and Americans to-day. It is not every truth that recommends itself to the common sense. Nature has a place for the wild clematis as well as for the cabbage. Some expressions of truth are reminiscent, — others merely *sensible*, as the phrase is, — others prophetic. Some forms of disease, even, may prophesy forms of health. The geologist has discovered that the figures of serpents, griffins, flying dragons, and other fanciful embellishments of heraldry, have their prototypes in the forms of fossil species which were extinct before man was created, and hence “indicate a faint and shadowy knowledge of a previous state of organic existence.” The Hindoos dreamed that the earth rested on an ele-

phant, and the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a serpent; and though it may be an unimportant coincidence, it will not be out of place here to state, that a fossil tortoise has lately been discovered in Asia large enough to support an elephant. I confess that I am partial to these wild fancies, which transcend the order of time and development. They are the sublimest recreation of the intellect. The partridge loves peas, but not those that go with her into the pot.

In short, all good things are wild and free. There is something in a strain of music, whether produced by an instrument or by the human voice, — take the sound of a bugle in a summer night, for instance, — which by its wildness, to speak without satire, reminds me of the cries emitted by wild beasts in their native forests. It is so much of their wildness as I can understand. Give me for my friends and neighbors wild men, not tame ones. The wildness of the savage is but a faint symbol of the awful ferity with which good men and lovers meet.

I love even to see the domestic animals reassert their native rights, — any evidence that they have not wholly lost their original wild habits and vigor; as when my neighbor's cow breaks out of her pasture early in the spring and boldly swims the river, a cold, gray tide, twenty-five or thirty rods wide, swollen by the melted snow. It is the buffalo crossing the Mississippi. This exploit confers some dignity on the herd in my eyes, — already dignified. The seeds of instinct are preserved under the thick hides of cattle and horses, like seeds in the bowels of the earth, an indefinite period.

Any sportiveness in cattle is unexpected. I saw one day a herd of a dozen bullocks and cows running about and frisking in unwieldy sport, like huge rats, even like kittens. They shook their heads, raised their tails, and rushed up and down a hill, and I perceived by their horns, as well as by their activity, their relation to the deer tribe. But, alas! a sudden loud *Whoa!* would have damped their ardor at once, reduced them from venison to beef, and stiffened their sides and sinews like the locomotive. Who but the Evil One has cried "Whoa!" to mankind? Indeed, the life of cattle, like that of many men, is but a sort of locomotiveness; they move a side at a time, and man, by his machinery, is meeting the horse and the ox half-way. Whatever part the whip has touched is thenceforth palsied. Who would ever think of a *side* of any of the supple cat tribe, as we speak of a *side* of beef?

I rejoice that horses and steers have to be broken before they can be made the slaves of men, and that men themselves have some wild oats still left to sow before they become submissive members of society. Undoubtedly, all men are not equally fit subjects for civilization; and because the majority, like dogs and sheep, are tame by inherited disposition, this is no reason why the others should have their natures broken that they may be reduced to the same level. Men are in the main alike, but they were made several in order that they might be various. If a low use is to be served, one man will do nearly or quite as well as another; if a high one, individual excellence is to be regarded. Any man can stop a hole to keep the wind away, but no

other man could serve so rare a use as the author of this illustration did. Confucius says, "The skins of the tiger and the leopard, when they are tanned, are as the skins of the dog and the sheep tanned." But it is not the part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious; and tanning their skins for shoes is not the best use to which they can be put.

When looking over a list of men's names in a foreign language, as of military officers, or of authors who have written on a particular subject, I am reminded once more that there is nothing in a name. The name Menschikoff, for instance, has nothing in it to my ears more human than a whisker, and it may belong to a rat. As the names of the Poles and Russians are to us, so are ours to them. It is as if they had been named by the child's rigmarole, *Iery wery ichery van, tittle-tol-tan*. I see in my mind a herd of wild creatures swarming over the earth, and to each the herdsman has affixed some barbarous sound in his own dialect. The names of men are, of course, as cheap and meaningless as *Bose* and *Tray*, the names of dogs.

Methinks it would be some advantage to philosophy if men were named merely in the gross, as they are known. It would be necessary only to know the genus and perhaps the race or variety, to know the individual. We are not prepared to believe that every private soldier in a Roman army had a name of his own, — because we have not supposed that he had a character of his own.

At present our only true names are nicknames. I knew a boy who, from his peculiar energy, was called

“Buster” by his playmates, and this rightly supplanted his Christian name. Some travelers tell us that an Indian had no name given him at first, but earned it, and his name was his fame; and among some tribes he acquired a new name with every new exploit. It is pitiful when a man bears a name for convenience merely, who has earned neither name nor fame.

I will not allow mere names to make distinctions for me, but still see men in herds for all them. A familiar name cannot make a man less strange to me. It may be given to a savage who retains in secret his own wild title earned in the woods. We have a wild savage in us, and a savage name is perchance somewhere recorded as ours. I see that my neighbor, who bears the familiar epithet William or Edwin, takes it off with his jacket. It does not adhere to him when asleep or in anger, or aroused by any passion or inspiration. I seem to hear pronounced by some of his kin at such a time his original wild name in some jaw-breaking or else melodious tongue.

Here is this vast, savage, howling mother of ours, Nature, lying all around, with such beauty, and such affection for her children, as the leopard; and yet we are so early weaned from her breast to society, to that culture which is exclusively an interaction of man on man, — a sort of breeding in and in, which produces at most a merely English nobility, a civilization destined to have a speedy limit.

In society, in the best institutions of men, it is easy to detect a certain precocity. When we should still be growing children, we are already little men. Give me a

culture which imports much muck from the meadows, and deepens the soil, — not that which trusts to heating manures, and improved implements and modes of culture only!

Many a poor sore-eyed student that I have heard of would grow faster, both intellectually and physically, if, instead of sitting up so very late, he honestly slumbered a fool's allowance.

There may be an excess even of informing light. Niepce, a Frenchman, discovered "actinism," that power in the sun's rays which produces a chemical effect; that granite rocks, and stone structures, and statues of metal "are all alike destructively acted upon during the hours of sunshine, and, but for provisions of Nature no less wonderful, would soon perish under the delicate touch of the most subtile of the agencies of the universe." But he observed that "those bodies which underwent this change during the daylight possessed the power of restoring themselves to their original conditions during the hours of night, when this excitement was no longer influencing them." Hence it has been inferred that "the hours of darkness are as necessary to the inorganic creation as we know night and sleep are to the organic kingdom." Not even does the moon shine every night, but gives place to darkness.

I would not have every man nor every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated: part will be tillage, but the greater part will be meadow and forest, not only serving an immediate use, but preparing a mould against a distant future, by the annual decay of the vegetation which it supports.

There are other letters for the child to learn than those which Cadmus invented. The Spaniards have a good term to express this wild and dusky knowledge, *Gramática parda*, tawny grammar, a kind of mother-wit derived from that same leopard to which I have referred.

We have heard of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. It is said that knowledge is power, and the like. Methinks there is equal need of a Society for the Diffusion of Useful Ignorance, what we will call Beautiful Knowledge, a knowledge useful in a higher sense: for what is most of our boasted so-called knowledge but a conceit that we know something, which robs us of the advantage of our actual ignorance? What we call knowledge is often our positive ignorance; ignorance our negative knowledge. By long years of patient industry and reading of the newspapers, — for what are the libraries of science but files of newspapers? — a man accumulates a myriad facts, lays them up in his memory, and then when in some spring of his life he saunters abroad into the Great Fields of thought, he, as it were, goes to grass like a horse and leaves all his harness behind in the stable. I would say to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, sometimes, — Go to grass. You have eaten hay long enough. The spring has come with its green crop. The very cows are driven to their country pastures before the end of May; though I have heard of one unnatural farmer who kept his cow in the barn and fed her on hay all the year round. So, frequently, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge treats its cattle.

A man's ignorance sometimes is not only useful, but beautiful, — while his knowledge, so called, is oftentimes worse than useless, besides being ugly. Which is the best man to deal with, — he who knows nothing about a subject, and, what is extremely rare, knows that he knows nothing, or he who really knows something about it, but thinks that he knows all?

My desire for knowledge is intermittent, but my desire to bathe my head in atmospheres unknown to my feet is perennial and constant. The highest that we can attain to is not Knowledge, but Sympathy with Intelligence. I do not know that this higher knowledge amounts to anything more definite than a novel and grand surprise on a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before, — a discovery that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. It is the lighting up of the mist by the sun. Man cannot *know* in any higher sense than this, any more than he can look serenely and with impunity in the face of the sun: Ὡς τὸ νοῶν, οὐ κείνον νοήσεις, “You will not perceive that, as perceiving a particular thing,” say the Chaldean Oracles.

There is something servile in the habit of seeking after a law which we may obey. We may study the laws of matter at and for our convenience, but a successful life knows no law. It is an unfortunate discovery certainly, that of a law which binds us where we did not know before that we were bound. Live free, child of the mist, — and with respect to knowledge we are all children of the mist. The man who takes the liberty to live is superior to all the laws, by virtue of his relation to the

lawmaker. "That is active duty," says the Vishnu Purana, "which is not for our bondage; that is knowledge which is for our liberation: all other duty is good only unto weariness; all other knowledge is only the cleverness of an artist."

It is remarkable how few events or crises there are in our histories, how little exercised we have been in our minds, how few experiences we have had. I would fain be assured that I am growing apace and rankly, though my very growth disturb this dull equanimity, — though it be with struggle through long, dark, muggy nights or seasons of gloom. It would be well if all our lives were a divine tragedy even, instead of this trivial comedy or farce. Dante, Bunyan, and others appear to have been exercised in their minds more than we: they were subjected to a kind of culture such as our district schools and colleges do not contemplate. Even Mahomet, though many may scream at his name, had a good deal more to live for, aye, and to die for, than they have commonly.

When, at rare intervals, some thought visits one, as perchance he is walking on a railroad, then, indeed, the cars go by without his hearing them. But soon, by some inexorable law, our life goes by and the cars return.

"Gentle breeze, that wanderest unseen,
And bendest the thistles round Loira of storms,
Traveler of the windy glens,
Why hast thou left my ear so soon?"

While almost all men feel an attraction drawing them to society, few are attracted strongly to Nature. In their

reaction to Nature men appear to me for the most part, notwithstanding their arts, lower than the animals. It is not often a beautiful relation, as in the case of the animals. How little appreciation of the beauty of the landscape there is among us! We have to be told that the Greeks called the world *Κόσμος*, Beauty, or Order, but we do not see clearly why they did so, and we esteem it at best only a curious philological fact.

For my part, I feel that with regard to Nature I live a sort of border life, on the confines of a world into which I make occasional and transient forays only, and my patriotism and allegiance to the state into whose territories I seem to retreat are those of a moss-trooper. Unto a life which I call natural I would gladly follow even a will-o'-the-wisp through bogs and sloughs unimaginable, but no moon nor firefly has shown me the causeway to it. Nature is a personality so vast and universal that we have never seen one of her features. The walker in the familiar fields which stretch around my native town sometimes finds himself in another land than is described in their owners' deeds, as it were in some faraway field on the confines of the actual Concord, where her jurisdiction ceases, and the idea which the word Concord suggests ceases to be suggested. These farms which I have myself surveyed, these bounds which I have set up, appear dimly still as through a mist; but they have no chemistry to fix them; they fade from the surface of the glass, and the picture which the painter painted stands out dimly from beneath. The world with which we are commonly acquainted leaves no trace, and it will have no anniversary.

I took a walk on Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me, — to whom the sun was servant, — who had not gone into society in the village, — who had not been called on. I saw their park, their pleasure-ground, beyond through the wood, in Spaulding's cranberry-meadow. The pines furnished them with gables as they grew. Their house was not obvious to vision; the trees grew through it. I do not know whether I heard the sounds of a suppressed hilarity or not. They seemed to recline on the sunbeams. They have sons and daughters. They are quite well. The farmer's cart-path, which leads directly through their hall, does not in the least put them out, as the muddy bottom of a pool is sometimes seen through the reflected skies. They never heard of Spaulding, and do not know that he is their neighbor, — notwithstanding I heard him whistle as he drove his team through the house. Nothing can equal the serenity of their lives. Their coat-of-arms is simply a lichen. I saw it painted on the pines and oaks. Their attics were in the tops of the trees. They are of no politics. There was no noise of labor. I did not perceive that they were weaving or spinning. Yet I did detect, when the wind lulled and hearing was done away, the finest imaginable sweet musical hum, — as of a distant hive in May, — which perchance was the sound of their thinking. They had no

idle thoughts, and no one without could see their work, for their industry was not as in knots and excrescences embayed.

But I find it difficult to remember them. They fade irrevocably out of my mind even now while I speak, and endeavor to recall them and recollect myself. It is only after a long and serious effort to recollect my best thoughts that I become again aware of their cohabitancy. If it were not for such families as this, I think I should move out of Concord.

We are accustomed to say in New England that few and fewer pigeons visit us every year. Our forests furnish no mast for them. So, it would seem, few and fewer thoughts visit each growing man from year to year, for the grove in our minds is laid waste, — sold to feed unnecessary fires of ambition, or sent to mill, — and there is scarcely a twig left for them to perch on. They no longer build nor breed with us. In some more genial season, perchance, a faint shadow flits across the landscape of the mind, cast by the *wings* of some thought in its vernal or autumnal migration, but, looking up, we are unable to detect the substance of the thought itself. Our winged thoughts are turned to poultry. They no longer soar, and they attain only to a Shanghai and Cochin-China grandeur. Those *gra-a-ate thoughts*, those *gra-a-ate men* you hear of!

We hug the earth, — how rarely we mount! Methinks we might elevate ourselves a little more. We might climb a tree, at least. I found my account in climbing

a tree once. It was a tall white pine, on the top of a hill; and though I got well pitched, I was well paid for it, for I discovered new mountains in the horizon which I had never seen before, — so much more of the earth and the heavens. I might have walked about the foot of the tree for threescore years and ten, and yet I certainly should never have seen them. But, above all, I discovered around me, — it was near the end of June, — on the ends of the topmost branches only, a few minute and delicate red cone-like blossoms, the fertile flower of the white pine looking heavenward. I carried straightway to the village the topmost spire, and showed it to stranger jurymen who walked the streets, — for it was court week, — and to farmers and lumber-dealers and woodchoppers and hunters, and not one had ever seen the like before, but they wondered as at a star dropped down. Tell of ancient architects finishing their works on the tops of columns as perfectly as on the lower and more visible parts! Nature has from the first expanded the minute blossoms of the forest only toward the heavens, above men's heads and unobserved by them. We see only the flowers that are under our feet in the meadows. The pines have developed their delicate blossoms on the highest twigs of the wood every summer for ages, as well over the heads of Nature's red children as of her white ones; yet scarcely a farmer or hunter in the land has ever seen them.

Above all, we cannot afford not to live in the present. He is blessed over all mortals who loses no moment of

the passing life in remembering the past. Unless our philosophy hears the cock crow in every barn-yard within our horizon, it is belated. That sound commonly reminds us that we are growing rusty and antique in our employments and habits of thought. His philosophy comes down to a more recent time than ours. There is something suggested by it that is a newer testament, — the gospel according to this moment. He has not fallen astern; he has got up early and kept up early, and to be where he is is to be in season, in the foremost rank of time. It is an expression of the health and soundness of Nature, a brag for all the world, — healthiness as of a spring burst forth, a new fountain of the Muses, to celebrate this last instant of time. Where he lives no fugitive slave laws are passed. Who has not betrayed his master many times since last he heard that note?

The merit of this bird's strain is in its freedom from all plaintiveness. The singer can easily move us to tears or to laughter, but where is he who can excite in us a pure morning joy? When, in doleful dumps, breaking the awful stillness of our wooden sidewalk on a Sunday, or, perchance, a watcher in the house of mourning, I hear a cockerel crow far or near, I think to myself, "There is one of us well, at any rate," — and with a sudden gush return to my senses.

We had a remarkable sunset one day last November. I was walking in a meadow, the source of a small brook, when the sun at last, just before setting, after a cold, gray day, reached a clear stratum in the horizon, and

the softest, brightest morning sunlight fell on the dry grass and on the stems of the trees in the opposite horizon and on the leaves of the shrub oaks on the hillside, while our shadows stretched long over the meadow eastward, as if we were the only motes in its beams. It was such a light as we could not have imagined a moment before, and the air also was so warm and serene that nothing was wanting to make a paradise of that meadow. When we reflected that this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen forever and ever, an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still.

The sun sets on some retired meadow, where no house is visible, with all the glory and splendor that it lavishes on cities, and perchance as it has never set before, — where there is but a solitary marsh hawk to have his wings gilded by it, or only a musquash looks out from his cabin, and there is some little black-veined brook in the midst of the marsh, just beginning to meander, winding slowly round a decaying stump. We walked in so pure and bright a light, gilding the withered grass and leaves, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or a murmur to it. The west side of every wood and rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening.

So we saunter toward the Holy Land, till one day the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done,

shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a bankside in autumn.

AUTUMNAL TINTS

EUROPEANS coming to America are surprised by the brilliancy of our autumnal foliage. There is no account of such a phenomenon in English poetry, because the trees acquire but few bright colors there. The most that Thomson says on this subject in his "Autumn" is contained in the lines, —

"But see the fading many-colored woods
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, dusk and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark;"

and in the line in which he speaks of

"Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods."

The autumnal change of our woods has not made a deep impression on our own literature yet. October has hardly tinged our poetry.

A great many, who have spent their lives in cities, and have never chanced to come into the country at this season, have never seen this, the flower, or rather the ripe fruit, of the year. I remember riding with one such citizen, who, though a fortnight too late for the most brilliant tints, was taken by surprise, and would not believe that there had been any brighter. He had never heard of this phenomenon before. Not only many in our towns have never witnessed it, but it is scarcely remembered by the majority from year to year.

Most appear to confound changed leaves with with-

ered ones, as if they were to confound ripe apples with rotten ones. I think that the change to some higher color in a leaf is an evidence that it has arrived at a late and perfect maturity, answering to the maturity of fruits. It is generally the lowest and oldest leaves which change first. But as the perfect-winged and usually bright-colored insect is short-lived, so the leaves ripen but to fall.

Generally, every fruit, on ripening, and just before it falls, when it commences a more independent and individual existence, requiring less nourishment from any source, and that not so much from the earth through its stem as from the sun and air, acquires a bright tint. So do leaves. The physiologist says it is "due to an increased absorption of oxygen." That is the scientific account of the matter, — only a reassertion of the fact. But I am more interested in the rosy cheek than I am to know what particular diet the maiden fed on. The very forest and herbage, the pellicle of the earth, must acquire a bright color, an evidence of its ripeness, — as if the globe itself were a fruit on its stem, with ever a cheek toward the sun.

Flowers are but colored leaves, fruits but ripe ones. The edible part of most fruits is, as the physiologist says, "the parenchyma or fleshy tissue of the leaf," of which they are formed.

Our appetites have commonly confined our views of ripeness and its phenomena, color, mellowness, and perfectness, to the fruits which we eat, and we are wont to forget that an immense harvest which we do not eat, hardly use at all, is annually ripened by Nature. At

our annual cattle-shows and horticultural exhibitions, we make, as we think, a great show of fair fruits, destined, however, to a rather ignoble end, fruits not valued for their beauty chiefly. But round about and within our towns there is annually another show of fruits, on an infinitely grander scale, fruits which address our taste for beauty alone.

October is the month for painted leaves. Their rich glow now flashes round the world. As fruits and leaves and the day itself acquire a bright tint just before they fall, so the year near its setting. October is its sunset sky; November the later twilight.

I formerly thought that it would be worth the while to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree, shrub, and herbaceous plant, when it had acquired its brightest characteristic color, in its transition from the green to the brown state, outline it, and copy its color exactly, with paint, in a book, which should be entitled "October, or Autumnal Tints," — beginning with the earliest reddening woodbine and the lake of radical leaves, and coming down through the maples, hickories, and sumachs, and many beautifully freckled leaves less generally known, to the latest oaks and aspens. What a memento such a book would be! You would need only to turn over its leaves to take a ramble through the autumn woods whenever you pleased. Or if I could preserve the leaves themselves, unfaded, it would be better still. I have made but little progress toward such a book, but I have endeavored, instead, to describe all these bright tints in the order in which they present themselves. The following are some extracts from my notes.

THE PURPLE GRASSES

By the twentieth of August, everywhere in woods and swamps we are reminded of the fall, both by the richly spotted sarsaparilla leaves and brakes, and the withering and blackened skunk-cabbage and hellebore, and, by the riverside, the already blackening pontederia.

The purple grass (*Eragrostis pectinacea*) is now in the height of its beauty. I remember still when I first noticed this grass particularly. Standing on a hillside near our river, I saw, thirty or forty rods off, a stripe of purple half a dozen rods long, under the edge of a wood, where the ground sloped toward a meadow. It was as high-colored and interesting, though not quite so bright, as the patches of rhexia, being a darker purple, like a berry's stain laid on close and thick. On going to and examining it, I found it to be a kind of grass in bloom, hardly a foot high, with but few green blades, and a fine spreading panicle of purple flowers, a shallow, purplish mist trembling around me. Close at hand it appeared but a dull purple, and made little impression on the eye; it was even difficult to detect; and if you plucked a single plant, you were surprised to find how thin it was, and how little color it had. But viewed at a distance in a favorable light, it was of a fine lively purple, flower-like, enriching the earth. Such puny causes combine to produce these decided effects. I was the more surprised and charmed because grass is commonly of a sober and humble color.

With its beautiful purple blush it reminds me, and

supplies the place, of the rhexia, which is now leaving off, and it is one of the most interesting phenomena of August. The finest patches of it grow on waste strips or selvages of land at the base of dry hills, just above the edge of the meadows, where the greedy mower does not deign to swing his scythe; for this is a thin and poor grass, beneath his notice. Or, it may be, because it is so beautiful he does not know that it exists; for the same eye does not see this and timothy. He carefully gets the meadow-hay and the more nutritious grasses which grow next to that, but he leaves this fine purple mist for the walker's harvest,— fodder for his fancy stock. Higher up the hill, perchance, grow also blackberries, John's-wort, and neglected, withered, and wiry June-grass. How fortunate that it grows in such places, and not in the midst of the rank grasses which are annually cut! Nature thus keeps use and beauty distinct. I know many such localities, where it does not fail to present itself annually, and paint the earth with its blush. It grows on the gentle slopes, either in a continuous patch or in scattered and rounded tufts a foot in diameter, and it lasts till it is killed by the first smart frosts.

In most plants the corolla or calyx is the part which attains the highest color, and is the most attractive; in many it is the seed-vessel or fruit; in others, as the red maple, the leaves; and in others still it is the very culm itself which is the principal flower or blooming part.

The last is especially the case with the poke or garget (*Phytolacca decandra*). Some which stand under our

cliffs quite dazzle me with their purple stems now and early in September. They are as interesting to me as most flowers, and one of the most important fruits of our autumn. Every part is flower (or fruit), such is its superfluity of color, — stem, branch, peduncle, pedicel, petiole, and even the at length yellowish, purple-veined leaves. Its cylindrical racemes of berries of various hues, from green to dark purple, six or seven inches long, are gracefully drooping on all sides, offering repasts to the birds; and even the sepals from which the birds have picked the berries are a brilliant lake red, with crimson flame-like reflections, equal to anything of the kind, — all on fire with ripeness. Hence the *lacca*, from *lac*, lake. There are at the same time flower-buds, flowers, green berries, dark-purple or ripe ones, and these flower-like sepals, all on the same plant.

We love to see any redness in the vegetation of the temperate zone. It is the color of colors. This plant speaks to our blood. It asks a bright sun on it to make it show to best advantage, and it must be seen at this season of the year. On warm hillsides its stems are ripe by the twenty-third of August. At that date I walked through a beautiful grove of them, six or seven feet high, on the side of one of our cliffs, where they ripen early. Quite to the ground they were a deep, brilliant purple, with a bloom contrasting with the still clear green leaves. It appears a rare triumph of Nature to have produced and perfected such a plant, as if this were enough for a summer. What a perfect maturity it arrives at! It is the emblem of a successful life concluded by a death not premature, which is an ornament

to Nature. What if we were to mature as perfectly, root and branch, glowing in the midst of our decay, like the poke! I confess that it excites me to behold them. I cut one for a cane, for I would fain handle and lean on it. I love to press the berries between my fingers, and see their juice staining my hand. To walk amid these upright, branching casks of purple wine, which retain and diffuse a sunset glow, tasting each one with your eye, instead of counting the pipes on a London dock, what a privilege! For Nature's vintage is not confined to the vine. Our poets have sung of wine, the product of a foreign plant which commonly they never saw, as if our own plants had no juice in them more than the singers. Indeed, this has been called by some the American grape, and, though a native of America, its juices are used in some foreign countries to improve the color of the wine; so that the poetaster may be celebrating the virtues of the poke without knowing it. Here are berries enough to paint afresh the western sky, and play the bacchanal with, if you will. And what flutes its ensanguined stems would make, to be used in such a dance! It is truly a royal plant. I could spend the evening of the year musing amid the poke stems. And perchance amid these groves might arise at last a new school of philosophy or poetry. It lasts all through September.

At the same time with this, or near the end of August, a to me very interesting genus of grasses, andropogons, or beard-grasses, is in its prime: *Andropogon furcatus*, forked beard-grass, or call it purple-fingered grass; *Andropogon scoparius*, purple wood-grass; and *Andropogon* (now called *Sorghum*) *nutans*, Indian-grass.

The first is a very tall and slender-culmed grass, three to seven feet high, with four or five purple finger-like spikes raying upward from the top. The second is also quite slender, growing in tufts two feet high by one wide, with culms often somewhat curving, which, as the spikes go out of bloom, have a whitish, fuzzy look. These two are prevailing grasses at this season on dry and sandy fields and hillsides. The culms of both, not to mention their pretty flowers, reflect a purple tinge, and help to declare the ripeness of the year. Perhaps I have the more sympathy with them because they are despised by the farmer, and occupy sterile and neglected soil. They are high-colored, like ripe grapes, and express a maturity which the spring did not suggest. Only the August sun could have thus burnished these culms and leaves. The farmer has long since done his upland haying, and he will not condescend to bring his scythe to where these slender wild grasses have at length flowered thinly; you often see spaces of bare sand amid them. But I walk encouraged between the tufts of purple wood-grass over the sandy fields, and along the edge of the shrub oaks, glad to recognize these simple contemporaries. With thoughts cutting a broad swathe I "get" them, with horse-raking thoughts I gather them into windrows. The fine-eared poet may hear the whetting of my scythe. These two were almost the first grasses that I learned to distinguish, for I had not known by how many friends I was surrounded; I had seen them simply as grasses standing. The purple of their culms also excites me like that of the poke-weed stems.

Think what refuge there is for one, before August is over, from college commencements and society that isolates! I can skulk amid the tufts of purple wood-grass on the borders of the "Great Fields." Wherever I walk these afternoons, the purple-fingered grass also stands like a guide-board, and points my thoughts to more poetic paths than they have lately traveled.

A man shall perhaps rush by and trample down plants as high as his head, and cannot be said to know that they exist, though he may have cut many tons of them, littered his stables with them, and fed them to his cattle for years. Yet, if he ever favorably attends to them, he may be overcome by their beauty. Each humblest plant, or weed, as we call it, stands there to express some thought or mood of ours; and yet how long it stands in vain! I had walked over those Great Fields so many Augusts, and never yet distinctly recognized these purple companions that I had there. I had brushed against them and trodden on them, forsooth; and now, at last, they, as it were, rose up and blessed me. Beauty and true wealth are always thus cheap and despised. Heaven might be defined as the place which men avoid. Who can doubt that these grasses, which the farmer says are of no account to him, find some compensation in your appreciation of them? I may say that I never saw them before; though, when I came to look them face to face, there did come down to me a purple gleam from previous years; and now, wherever I go, I see hardly anything else. It is the reign and presidency of the andropogons.

Almost the very sands confess the ripening influence

of the August sun, and methinks, together with the slender grasses waving over them, reflect a purple tinge. The impurpled sands! Such is the consequence of all this sunshine absorbed into the pores of plants and of the earth. All sap or blood is now wine-colored. At last we have not only the purple sea, but the purple land.

The chestnut beard-grass, Indian-grass, or wood-grass, growing here and there in waste places, but more rare than the former (from two to four or five feet high), is still handsomer and of more vivid colors than its congeners, and might well have caught the Indian's eye. It has a long, narrow, one-sided, and slightly nodding panicle of bright purple and yellow flowers, like a banner raised above its reedy leaves. These bright standards are now advanced on the distant hillsides, not in large armies, but in scattered troops or single file, like the red men. They stand thus fair and bright, representative of the race which they are named after, but for the most part unobserved as they. The expression of this grass haunted me for a week, after I first passed and noticed it, like the glance of an eye. It stands like an Indian chief taking a last look at his favorite hunting-grounds.

THE RED MAPLE

By the twenty-fifth of September, the red maples generally are beginning to be ripe. Some large ones have been conspicuously changing for a week, and some single trees are now very brilliant. I notice a small one, half a mile off across a meadow, against the green woodside there, a far brighter red than the blos-

soms of any tree in summer, and more conspicuous. I have observed this tree for several autumns invariably changing earlier than its fellows, just as one tree ripens its fruit earlier than another. It might serve to mark the season, perhaps. I should be sorry if it were cut down. I know of two or three such trees in different parts of our town, which might, perhaps, be propagated from, as early ripeners or September trees, and their seed be advertised in the market, as well as that of radishes, if we cared as much about them.

At present these burning bushes stand chiefly along the edge of the meadows, or I distinguish them afar on the hillsides here and there. Sometimes you will see many small ones in a swamp turned quite crimson when all other trees around are still perfectly green, and the former appear so much the brighter for it. They take you by surprise, as you are going by on one side, across the fields, thus early in the season, as if it were some gay encampment of the red men, or other foresters, of whose arrival you had not heard.

Some single trees, wholly bright scarlet, seen against others of their kind still freshly green, or against evergreens, are more memorable than whole groves will be by and by. How beautiful, when a whole tree is like one great scarlet fruit full of ripe juices, every leaf, from lowest limb to topmost spire, all aglow, especially if you look toward the sun! What more remarkable object can there be in the landscape? Visible for miles, too fair to be believed. If such a phenomenon occurred but once, it would be handed down by tradition to posterity, and get into the mythology at last.

The whole tree thus ripening in advance of its fellows attains a singular preëminence, and sometimes maintains it for a week or two. I am thrilled at the sight of it, bearing aloft its scarlet standard for the regiment of green-clad foresters around, and I go half a mile out of my way to examine it. A single tree becomes thus the crowning beauty of some meadowy vale, and the expression of the whole surrounding forest is at once more spirited for it.

A small red maple has grown, perchance, far away at the head of some retired valley, a mile from any road, unobserved. It has faithfully discharged the duties of a maple there, all winter and summer, neglected none of its economies, but added to its stature in the virtue which belongs to a maple, by a steady growth for so many months, never having gone gadding abroad, and is nearer heaven than it was in the spring. It has faithfully husbanded its sap, and afforded a shelter to the wandering bird, has long since ripened its seeds and committed them to the winds, and has the satisfaction of knowing, perhaps, that a thousand little well-behaved maples are already settled in life somewhere. It deserves well of Mapledom. Its leaves have been asking it from time to time, in a whisper, "When shall we redden?" And now, in this month of September, this month of traveling, when men are hastening to the seaside, or the mountains, or the lakes, this modest maple, still without budging an inch, travels in its reputation, — runs up its scarlet flag on that hillside, which shows that it has finished its summer's work before all other trees, and withdraws from the

contest. At the eleventh hour of the year, the tree which no scrutiny could have detected here when it was most industrious is thus, by the tint of its maturity, by its very blushes, revealed at last to the careless and distant traveler, and leads his thoughts away from the dusty road into those brave solitudes which it inhabits. It flashes out conspicuous with all the virtue and beauty of a maple,—*Acer rubrum*. We may now read its title, or *rubric*, clear. Its *virtues*, not its sins, are as scarlet.

Notwithstanding the red maple is the most intense scarlet of any of our trees, the sugar maple has been the most celebrated, and Michaux in his “*Sylva*” does not speak of the autumnal color of the former. About the second of October, these trees, both large and small, are most brilliant, though many are still green. In “sprout-lands” they seem to vie with one another, and ever some particular one in the midst of the crowd will be of a peculiarly pure scarlet, and by its more intense color attract our eye even at a distance, and carry off the palm. A large red maple swamp, when at the height of its change, is the most obviously brilliant of all tangible things, where I dwell, so abundant is this tree with us. It varies much both in form and color. A great many are merely yellow; more, scarlet; others, scarlet deepening into crimson, more red than common. Look at yonder swamp of maples mixed with pines, at the base of a pine-clad hill, a quarter of a mile off, so that you get the full effect of the bright colors, without detecting the imperfections of the leaves, and see their yellow, scarlet, and crimson fires, of all

tints, mingled and contrasted with the green. Some maples are yet green, only yellow or crimson-tipped on the edges of their flakes, like the edges of a hazelnut bur; some are wholly brilliant scarlet, raying out regularly and finely every way, bilaterally, like the veins of a leaf; others, of more irregular form, when I turn my head slightly, emptying out some of its earthiness and concealing the trunk of the tree, seem to rest heavily flake on flake, like yellow and scarlet clouds, wreath upon wreath, or like snow-drifts driving through the air, stratified by the wind. It adds greatly to the beauty of such a swamp at this season, that, even though there may be no other trees interspersed, it is not seen as a simple mass of color, but, different trees being of different colors and hues, the outline of each crescent treetop is distinct, and where one laps on to another. Yet a painter would hardly venture to make them thus distinct a quarter of a mile off.

As I go across a meadow directly toward a low rising ground this bright afternoon, I see, some fifty rods off toward the sun, the top of a maple swamp just appearing over the sheeny russet edge of the hill, a stripe apparently twenty rods long by ten feet deep, of the most intensely brilliant scarlet, orange, and yellow, equal to any flowers or fruits, or any tints ever painted. As I advance, lowering the edge of the hill which makes the firm foreground or lower frame of the picture, the depth of the brilliant grove revealed steadily increases, suggesting that the whole of the inclosed valley is filled with such color. One wonders that the tithing-men and fathers of the town are not out to see what the trees

mean by their high colors and exuberance of spirits, fearing that some mischief is brewing. I do not see what the Puritans did at this season, when the maples blaze out in scarlet. They certainly could not have worshiped in groves then. Perhaps that is what they built meeting-houses and fenced them round with horse-sheds for.

THE ELM

Now too, the first of October, or later, the elms are at the height of their autumnal beauty, — great brownish-yellow masses, warm from their September oven, hanging over the highway. Their leaves are perfectly ripe. I wonder if there is any answering ripeness in the lives of the men who live beneath them. As I look down our street, which is lined with them, they remind me both by their form and color of yellowing sheaves of grain, as if the harvest had indeed come to the village itself, and we might expect to find some maturity and *flavor* in the thoughts of the villagers at last. Under those bright rustling yellow piles just ready to fall on the heads of the walkers, how can any crudity or greenness of thought or act prevail? When I stand where half a dozen large elms droop over a house, it is as if I stood within a ripe pumpkin-rind, and I feel as mellow as if I were the pulp, though I may be somewhat stringy and seedy withal. What is the late greenness of the English elm, like a cucumber out of season, which does not know when to have done, compared with the early and golden maturity of the American tree? The street is the scene of a great harvest-home. It would be worth the while to set out these trees, if only

for their autumnal value. Think of these great yellow canopies or parasols held over our heads and houses by the mile together, making the village all one and compact, — an *ulmarium*, which is at the same time a nursery of men! And then how gently and unobserved they drop their burden and let in the sun when it is wanted, their leaves not heard when they fall on our roofs and in our streets; and thus the village parasol is shut up and put away! I see the market-man driving into the village, and disappearing under its canopy of elm-tops, with *his* crop, as into a great granary or barn-yard. I am tempted to go thither as to a husking of thoughts, now dry and ripe, and ready to be separated from their integuments; but, alas! I foresee that it will be chiefly husks and little thought, blasted pig-corn, fit only for cob-meal, — for, as you sow, so shall you reap.

FALLEN LEAVES

By the sixth of October the leaves generally begin to fall, in successive showers, after frost or rain; but the principal leaf-harvest, the acme of the *Fall*, is commonly about the sixteenth. Some morning at that date there is perhaps a harder frost than we have seen, and ice formed under the pump, and now, when the morning wind rises, the leaves come down in denser showers than ever. They suddenly form thick beds or carpets on the ground, in this gentle air, or even without wind, just the size and form of the tree above. Some trees, as small hickories, appear to have dropped their leaves instantaneously, as a soldier grounds arms at a signal;

and those of the hickory, being bright yellow still, though withered, reflect a blaze of light from the ground where they lie. Down they have come on all sides, at the first earnest touch of autumn's wand, making a sound like rain.

Or else it is after moist and rainy weather that we notice how great a fall of leaves there has been in the night, though it may not yet be the touch that loosens the rock maple leaf. The streets are thickly strewn with the trophies, and fallen elm leaves make a dark brown pavement under our feet. After some remarkably warm Indian-summer day or days, I perceive that it is the unusual heat which, more than anything, causes the leaves to fall, there having been, perhaps, no frost nor rain for some time. The intense heat suddenly ripens and wilts them, just as it softens and ripens peaches and other fruits, and causes them to drop.

The leaves of late red maples, still bright, strew the earth, often crimson-spotted on a yellow ground, like some wild apples, — though they preserve these bright colors on the ground but a day or two, especially if it rains. On causeways I go by trees here and there all bare and smoke-like, having lost their brilliant clothing; but there it lies, nearly as bright as ever, on the ground on one side, and making nearly as regular a figure as lately on the tree. I would rather say that I first observe the trees thus flat on the ground like a permanent colored shadow, and they suggest to look for the boughs that bore them. A queen might be proud to walk where these gallant trees have spread their bright cloaks in the mud. I see wagons roll over them as a

shadow or a reflection, and the drivers heed them just as little as they did their shadows before.

Birds' nests, in the huckleberry and other shrubs, and in trees, are already being filled with the withered leaves. So many have fallen in the woods that a squirrel cannot run after a falling nut without being heard. Boys are raking them in the streets, if only for the pleasure of dealing with such clean, crisp substances. Some sweep the paths scrupulously neat, and then stand to see the next breath strew them with new trophies. The swamp floor is thickly covered, and the *Lycopodium lucidulum* looks suddenly greener amid them. In dense woods they half cover pools that are three or four rods long. The other day I could hardly find a well-known spring, and even suspected that it had dried up, for it was completely concealed by freshly fallen leaves; and when I swept them aside and revealed it, it was like striking the earth, with Aaron's rod, for a new spring. Wet grounds about the edges of swamps look dry with them. At one swamp, where I was surveying, thinking to step on a leafy shore from a rail, I got into the water more than a foot deep.

When I go to the river the day after the principal fall of leaves, the sixteenth, I find my boat all covered, bottom and seats, with the leaves of the golden willow under which it is moored, and I set sail with a cargo of them rustling under my feet. If I empty it, it will be full again to-morrow. I do not regard them as litter, to be swept out, but accept them as suitable straw or matting for the bottom of my carriage. When I turn up into the mouth of the Assabet, which is wooded,

large fleets of leaves are floating on its surface, as it were getting out to sea, with room to tack; but next the shore, a little farther up, they are thicker than foam, quite concealing the water for a rod in width, under and amid the alders, button-bushes, and maples, still perfectly light and dry, with fibre unrelaxed; and at a rocky bend where they are met and stopped by the morning wind, they sometimes form a broad and dense crescent quite across the river. When I turn my prow that way, and the wave which it makes strikes them, list what a pleasant rustling from these dry substances getting on one another! Often it is their undulation only which reveals the water beneath them. Also every motion of the wood turtle on the shore is betrayed by their rustling there. Or even in mid-channel, when the wind rises, I hear them blown with a rustling sound. Higher up they are slowly moving round and round in some great eddy which the river makes, as that at the "Leaning Hemlocks," where the water is deep, and the current is wearing into the bank.

Perchance, in the afternoon of such a day, when the water is perfectly calm and full of reflections, I paddle gently down the main stream, and, turning up the Assabet, reach a quiet cove, where I unexpectedly find myself surrounded by myriads of leaves, like fellow-voyagers, which seem to have the same purpose, or want of purpose, with myself. See this great fleet of scattered leaf-boats which we paddle amid, in this smooth river-bay, each one curled up on every side by the sun's skill, each nerve a stiff spruce knee, — like boats of hide, and of all patterns, — Charon's boat prob-

ably among the rest, — and some with lofty prows and poops, like the stately vessels of the ancients, scarcely moving in the sluggish current, — like the great fleets, the dense Chinese cities of boats, with which you mingle on entering some great mart, some New York or Canton, which we are all steadily approaching together. How gently each has been deposited on the water! No violence has been used towards them yet, though, perchance, palpitating hearts were present at the launching. And painted ducks, too, the splendid wood duck among the rest, often come to sail and float amid the painted leaves, — barks of a nobler model still!

What wholesome herb drinks are to be had in the swamps now! What strong medicinal but rich scents from the decaying leaves! The rain falling on the freshly dried herbs and leaves, and filling the pools and ditches into which they have dropped thus clean and rigid, will soon convert them into tea, — green, black, brown, and yellow teas, of all degrees of strength, enough to set all Nature a-gossiping. Whether we drink them or not, as yet, before their strength is drawn, these leaves, dried on great Nature's coppers, are of such various pure and delicate tints as might make the fame of Oriental teas.

How they are mixed up, of all species, oak and maple and chestnut and birch! But Nature is not cluttered with them; she is a perfect husbandman; she stores them all. Consider what a vast crop is thus annually shed on the earth! This, more than any mere grain or seed, is the great harvest of the year. The trees are now repaying the earth with interest what they have

taken from it. They are discounting. They are about to add a leaf's thickness to the depth of the soil. This is the beautiful way in which Nature gets her muck, while I chaffer with this man and that, who talks to me about sulphur and the cost of carting. We are all the richer for their decay. I am more interested in this crop than in the English grass alone or in the corn. It prepares the virgin mould for future corn-fields and forests, on which the earth fattens. It keeps our homestead in good heart.

For beautiful variety no crop can be compared with this. Here is not merely the plain yellow of the grains, but nearly all the colors that we know, the brightest blue not excepted: the early blushing maple, the poison sumach blazing its sins as scarlet, the mulberry ash, the rich chrome yellow of the poplars, the brilliant red huckleberry, with which the hills' backs are painted, like those of sheep. The frost touches them, and, with the slightest breath of returning day or jarring of earth's axle, see in what showers they come floating down! The ground is all parti-colored with them. But they still live in the soil, whose fertility and bulk they increase, and in the forests that spring from it. They stoop to rise, to mount higher in coming years, by subtle chemistry, climbing by the sap in the trees; and the sapling's first fruits thus shed, transmuted at last, may adorn its crown, when, in after years, it has become the monarch of the forest.

It is pleasant to walk over the beds of these fresh, crisp, and rustling leaves. How beautifully they go to their graves! how gently lay themselves down and

turn to mould! — painted of a thousand hues, and fit to make the beds of us living. So they troop to their last resting-place, light and frisky. They put on no weeds, but merrily they go scampering over the earth, selecting the spot, choosing a lot, ordering no iron fence, whispering all through the woods about it, — some choosing the spot where the bodies of men are mouldering beneath, and meeting them half-way. How many flutterings before they rest quietly in their graves! They that soared so loftily, how contentedly they return to dust again, and are laid low, resigned to lie and decay at the foot of the tree, and afford nourishment to new generations of their kind, as well as to flutter on high! They teach us how to die. One wonders if the time will ever come when men, with their boasted faith in immortality, will lie down as gracefully and as ripe, — with such an Indian-summer serenity will shed their bodies, as they do their hair and nails.

When the leaves fall, the whole earth is a cemetery pleasant to walk in. I love to wander and muse over them in their graves. Here are no lying nor vain epitaphs. What though you own no lot at Mount Auburn? Your lot is surely cast somewhere in this vast cemetery, which has been consecrated from of old. You need attend no auction to secure a place. There is room enough here. The loosestrife shall bloom and the huckleberry-bird sing over your bones. The woodman and hunter shall be your sextons, and the children shall tread upon the borders as much as they will. Let us walk in the cemetery of the leaves; this is your true Greenwood Cemetery.

THE SUGAR MAPLE

But think not that the splendor of the year is over; for as one leaf does not make a summer, neither does one falling leaf make an autumn. The smallest sugar maples in our streets make a great show as early as the fifth of October, more than any other trees there. As I look up the main street, they appear like painted screens standing before the houses; yet many are green. But now, or generally by the seventeenth of October, when almost all red maples and some white maples are bare, the large sugar maples also are in their glory, glowing with yellow and red, and show unexpectedly bright and delicate tints. They are remarkable for the contrast they often afford of deep blushing red on one half and green on the other. They become at length dense masses of rich yellow with a deep scarlet blush, or more than blush, on the exposed surfaces. They are the brightest trees now in the street.

The large ones on our Common are particularly beautiful. A delicate but warmer than golden yellow is now the prevailing color, with scarlet cheeks. Yet, standing on the east side of the Common just before sundown, when the western light is transmitted through them, I see that their yellow even, compared with the pale lemon yellow of an elm close by, amounts to a scarlet, without noticing the bright scarlet portions. Generally, they are great regular oval masses of yellow and scarlet. All the sunny warmth of the season, the Indian summer, seems to be absorbed in their leaves. The lowest and inmost leaves next the bole are, as

usual, of the most delicate yellow and green, like the complexion of young men brought up in the house. There is an auction on the Common to-day, but its red flag is hard to be discerned amid this blaze of color.

Little did the fathers of the town anticipate this brilliant success, when they caused to be imported from farther in the country some straight poles with their tops cut off, which they called sugar maples; and, as I remember, after they were set out, a neighboring merchant's clerk, by way of jest, planted beans about them. Those which were then jestingly called bean-poles are to-day far the most beautiful objects noticeable in our streets. They are worth all and more than they have cost, — though one of the selectmen, while setting them out, took the cold which occasioned his death, — if only because they have filled the open eyes of children with their rich color unstintedly so many Octobers. We will not ask them to yield us sugar in the spring, while they afford us so fair a prospect in the autumn. Wealth indoors may be the inheritance of few, but it is equally distributed on the Common. All children alike can revel in this golden harvest.

Surely trees should be set in our streets with a view to their October splendor, though I doubt whether this is ever considered by the "Tree Society." Do you not think it will make some odds to these children that they were brought up under the maples? Hundreds of eyes are steadily drinking in this color, and by these teachers even the truants are caught and educated the moment they step abroad. Indeed, neither the truant nor the studious is at present taught color in the schools.

These are instead of the bright colors in apothecaries' shops and city windows. It is a pity that we have no more *red* maples, and some hickories, in our streets as well. Our paint-box is very imperfectly filled. Instead of, or beside, supplying such paint-boxes as we do, we might supply these natural colors to the young. Where else will they study color under greater advantages? What School of Design can vie with this? Think how much the eyes of painters of all kinds, and of manufacturers of cloth and paper, and paper-stainers, and countless others, are to be educated by these autumnal colors. The stationer's envelopes may be of very various tints, yet not so various as those of the leaves of a single tree. If you want a different shade or tint of a particular color, you have only to look farther within or without the tree or the wood. These leaves are not many dipped in one dye, as at the dye-house, but they are dyed in light of infinitely various degrees of strength and left to set and dry there.

Shall the names of so many of our colors continue to be derived from those of obscure foreign localities, as Naples yellow, Prussian blue, raw Sienna, burnt Umber, Gamboge? (surely the Tyrian purple must have faded by this time), or from comparatively trivial articles of commerce, — chocolate, lemon, coffee, cinnamon, claret? (shall we compare our hickory to a lemon, or a lemon to a hickory?) or from ores and oxides which few ever see? Shall we so often, when describing to our neighbors the color of something we have seen, refer them, not to some natural object in our neighborhood, but perchance to a bit of earth fetched from the

other side of the planet, which possibly they may find at the apothecary's, but which probably neither they nor we ever saw? Have we not an *earth* under our feet, — aye, and a sky over our heads? Or is the last *all* ultramarine? What do we know of sapphire, amethyst, emerald, ruby, amber, and the like, — most of us who take these names in vain? Leave these precious words to cabinet-keepers, virtuosos, and maids-of-honor, — to the Nabobs, Begums, and Chobdars of Hindostan, or wherever else. I do not see why, since America and her autumn woods have been discovered, our leaves should not compete with the precious stones in giving names to colors; and, indeed, I believe that in course of time the names of some of our trees and shrubs, as well as flowers, will get into our popular chromatic nomenclature.

But of much more importance than a knowledge of the names and distinctions of color is the joy and exhilaration which these colored leaves excite. Already these brilliant trees throughout the street, without any more variety, are at least equal to an annual festival and holiday, or a week of such. These are cheap and innocent gala-days, celebrated by one and all without the aid of committees or marshals, such a show as may safely be licensed, not attracting gamblers or rum-sellers, not requiring any special police to keep the peace. And poor indeed must be that New England village's October which has not the maple in its streets. This October festival costs no powder, nor ringing of bells, but every tree is a living liberty-pole on which a thousand bright flags are waving.

No wonder that we must have our annual cattle-show, and fall training, and perhaps cornwallis, our September courts, and the like. Nature herself holds her annual fair in October, not only in the streets, but in every hollow and on every hillside. When lately we looked into that red maple swamp all ablaze, where the trees were clothed in their vestures of most dazzling tints, did it not suggest a thousand gypsies beneath, — a race capable of wild delight, — or even the fabled fauns, satyrs, and wood-nymphs come back to earth? Or was it only a congregation of wearied woodchoppers, or of proprietors come to inspect their lots, that we thought of? Or, earlier still, when we paddled on the river through that fine-grained September air, did there not appear to be something new going on under the sparkling surface of the stream, a shaking of props, at least, so that we made haste in order to be up in time? Did not the rows of yellowing willows and button-bushes on each side seem like rows of booths, under which, perhaps, some fluviate egg-pop equally yellow was effervescing? Did not all these suggest that man's spirits should rise as high as Nature's, — should hang out their flag, and the routine of his life be interrupted by an analogous expression of joy and hilarity?

No annual training or muster of soldiery, no celebration with its scarfs and banners, could import into the town a hundredth part of the annual splendor of our October. We have only to set the trees, or let them stand, and Nature will find the colored drapery, — flags of all her nations, some of whose private signals hardly the botanist can read, — while we walk under the tri-

umphal arches of the elms. Leave it to Nature to appoint the days, whether the same as in neighboring States or not, and let the clergy read her proclamations, if they can understand them. Behold what a brilliant drapery is her woodbine flag! What public-spirited merchant, think you, has contributed this part of the show? There is no handsomer shingling and paint than this vine, at present covering a whole side of some houses. I do not believe that the ivy *never sere* is comparable to it. No wonder it has been extensively introduced into London. Let us have a good many maples and hickories and scarlet oaks, then, I say. Blaze away! Shall that dirty roll of bunting in the gun-house be all the colors a village can display? A village is not complete, unless it have these trees to mark the season in it. They are important, like the town clock. A village that has them not will not be found to work well. It has a screw loose, an essential part is wanting. Let us have willows for spring, elms for summer, maples and walnuts and tupeloes for autumn, evergreens for winter, and oaks for all seasons. What is a gallery in a house to a gallery in the streets, which every market-man rides through, whether he will or not? Of course, there is not a picture-gallery in the country which would be worth so much to us as is the western view at sunset under the elms of our main street. They are the frame to a picture which is daily painted behind them. An avenue of elms as large as our largest and three miles long would seem to lead to some admirable place, though only C—— were at the end of it.

A village needs these innocent stimulants of bright

and cheering prospects to keep off melancholy and superstition. Show me two villages, one embowered in trees and blazing with all the glories of October, the other a merely trivial and treeless waste, or with only a single tree or two for suicides, and I shall be sure that in the latter will be found the most starved and bigoted religionists and the most desperate drinkers. Every wash-tub and milk-can and gravestone will be exposed. The inhabitants will disappear abruptly behind their barns and houses, like desert Arabs amid their rocks, and I shall look to see spears in their hands. They will be ready to accept the most barren and forlorn doctrine, — as that the world is speedily coming to an end, or has already got to it, or that they themselves are turned wrong side outward. They will perchance crack their dry joints at one another and call it a spiritual communication.

But to confine ourselves to the maples. What if we were to take half as much pains in protecting them as we do in setting them out, — not stupidly tie our horses to our dahlia stems?

What meant the fathers by establishing this *perfectly living* institution before the church, — this institution which needs no repairing nor repainting, which is continually enlarged and repaired by its growth? Surely they

“Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Themselves from God they could not free;
They *planted* better than they knew; —
The conscious *trees* to beauty grew.”

Verily these maples are cheap preachers, permanently

settled, which preach their half-century, and century, aye, and century-and-a-half sermons, with constantly increasing unction and influence, ministering to many generations of men; and the least we can do is to supply them with suitable colleagues as they grow infirm.

THE SCARLET OAK

Belonging to a genus which is remarkable for the beautiful form of its leaves, I suspect that some scarlet oak leaves surpass those of all other oaks in the rich and wild beauty of their outlines. I judge from an acquaintance with twelve species, and from drawings which I have seen of many others.

Stand under this tree and see how finely its leaves are cut against the sky, — as it were, only a few sharp points extending from a midrib. They look like double, treble, or quadruple crosses. They are far more ethereal than the less deeply scalloped oak leaves. They have so little leafy *terra firma* that they appear melting away in the light, and scarcely obstruct our view. The leaves of very young plants are, like those of full-grown oaks of other species, more entire, simple, and lumpish in their outlines, but these, raised high on old trees, have solved the leafy problem. Lifted higher and higher, and sublimated more and more, putting off some earthiness and cultivating more intimacy with the light each year, they have at length the least possible amount of earthy matter, and the greatest spread and grasp of skyey influences. There they dance, arm in arm with the light, — tripping it on fantastic points, fit partners in those aerial halls. So intimately mingled are they with it,

that, what with their slenderness and their glossy surfaces, you can hardly tell at last what in the dance is leaf and what is light. And when no zephyr stirs, they are at most but a rich tracery to the forest windows.

I am again struck with their beauty, when, a month later, they thickly strew the ground in the woods, piled one upon another under my feet. They are then brown above, but purple beneath. With their narrow lobes and their bold, deep scallops reaching almost to the middle, they suggest that the material must be cheap, or else there has been a lavish expense in their creation, as if so much had been cut out. Or else they seem to us the remnants of the stuff out of which leaves have been cut with a die. Indeed, when they lie thus one upon another, they remind me of a pile of scrap-tin.

Or bring one home, and study it closely at your leisure, by the fireside. It is a type, not from any Oxford font, not in the Basque nor the arrow-headed character, not found on the Rosetta Stone, but destined to be copied in sculpture one day, if they ever get to whittling stone here. What a wild and pleasing outline, a combination of graceful curves and angles! The eye rests with equal delight on what is not leaf and on what is leaf, — on the broad, free, open sinuses, and on the long, sharp, bristle-pointed lobes. A simple oval outline would include it all, if you connected the points of the leaf; but how much richer is it than that, with its half-dozen deep scallops, in which the eye and thought of the beholder are embayed! If I were a drawing-master, I would set my pupils to copying these leaves, that they might learn to draw firmly and gracefully.

Regarded as water, it is like a pond with half a dozen broad rounded promontories extending nearly to its middle, half from each side, while its watery bays extend far inland, like sharp friths, at each of whose heads several fine streams empty in, — almost a leafy archipelago.

But it oftener suggests land, and, as Dionysius and Pliny compared the form of the Morea to that of the leaf of the Oriental plane tree, so this leaf reminds me of some fair wild island in the ocean, whose extensive coast, alternate rounded bays with smooth strands, and sharp-pointed rocky capes, mark it as fitted for the habitation of man, and destined to become a centre of civilization at last. To the sailor's eye, it is a much indented shore. Is it not, in fact, a shore to the aerial ocean, on which the windy surf beats? At sight of this leaf we are all mariners, — if not vikings, buccaneers, and filibusters. Both our love of repose and our spirit of adventure are addressed. In our most casual glance, perchance, we think that if we succeed in doubling those sharp capes we shall find deep, smooth, and secure havens in the ample bays. How different from the white oak leaf, with its rounded headlands, on which no lighthouse need be placed! That is an England, with its long civil history, that may be read. This is some still unsettled New-found Island or Celebes. Shall we go and be rajahs there?

By the twenty-sixth of October the large scarlet oaks are in their prime, when other oaks are usually withered. They have been kindling their fires for a week past, and now generally burst into a blaze. This alone

of *our* indigenous deciduous trees (excepting the dog-wood, of which I do not know half a dozen, and they are but large bushes) is now in its glory. The two aspens and the sugar maple come nearest to it in date, but they have lost the greater part of their leaves. Of evergreens, only the pitch pine is still commonly bright.

But it requires a particular alertness, if not devotion to these phenomena, to appreciate the wide-spread, but late and unexpected glory of the scarlet oaks. I do not speak here of the small trees and shrubs, which are commonly observed, and which are now withered, but of the large trees. Most go in and shut their doors, thinking that bleak and colorless November has already come, when some of the most brilliant and memorable colors are not yet lit.

This very perfect and vigorous one, about forty feet high, standing in an open pasture, which was quite glossy green on the twelfth, is now, the twenty-sixth, completely changed to bright dark-scarlet, — every leaf, between you and the sun, as if it had been dipped into a scarlet dye. The whole tree is much like a heart in form, as well as color. Was not this worth waiting for? Little did you think, ten days ago, that that cold green tree would assume such color as this. Its leaves are still firmly attached, while those of other trees are falling around it. It seems to say: "I am the last to blush, but I blush deeper than any of ye. I bring up the rear in my red coat. We scarlet ones, alone of oaks, have not given up the fight."

The sap is now, and even far into November, frequently flowing fast in these trees, as in maples in the

spring; and apparently their bright tints, now that most other oaks are withered, are connected with this phenomenon. They are full of life. It has a pleasantly astringent, acorn-like taste, this strong oak wine, as I find on tapping them with my knife.

Looking across this woodland valley, a quarter of a mile wide, how rich those scarlet oaks embosomed in pines, their bright red branches intimately intermingled with them! They have their full effect there. The pine boughs are the green calyx to their red petals. Or, as we go along a road in the woods, the sun striking endwise through it, and lighting up the red tents of the oaks, which on each side are mingled with the liquid green of the pines, makes a very gorgeous scene. Indeed, without the evergreens for contrast, the autumnal tints would lose much of their effect.

The scarlet oak asks a clear sky and the brightness of late October days. These bring out its colors. If the sun goes into a cloud they become comparatively indistinct. As I sit on a cliff in the southwest part of our town, the sun is now getting low, and the woods in Lincoln, south and east of me, are lit up by its more level rays; and in the scarlet oaks, scattered so equally over the forest, there is brought out a more brilliant redness than I had believed was in them. Every tree of this species which is visible in those directions, even to the horizon, now stands out distinctly red. Some great ones lift their red backs high above the woods, in the next town, like huge roses with a myriad of fine petals; and some more slender ones, in a small grove of white pines on Pine Hill in the east, on the very verge of the horizon, alter-

nating with the pines on the edge of the grove, and shouldering them with their red coats, look like soldiers in red amid hunters in green. This time it is Lincoln green, too. Till the sun got low, I did not believe that there were so many redcoats in the forest army. Theirs is an intense, burning red, which would lose some of its strength, methinks, with every step you might take toward them; for the shade that lurks amid their foliage does not report itself at this distance, and they are unanimously red. The focus of their reflected color is in the atmosphere far on this side. Every such tree becomes a nucleus of red, as it were, where, with the declining sun, that color grows and glows. It is partly borrowed fire, gathering strength from the sun on its way to your eye. It has only some comparatively dull red leaves for a rallying-point, or kindling-stuff, to start it, and it becomes an intense scarlet or red mist, or fire, which finds fuel for itself in the very atmosphere. So vivacious is redness. The very rails reflect a rosy light at this hour and season. You see a redder tree than exists.

If you wish to count the scarlet oaks, do it now. In a clear day stand thus on a hilltop in the woods, when the sun is an hour high, and every one within range of your vision, excepting in the west, will be revealed. You might live to the age of Methuselah and never find a tithe of them, otherwise. Yet sometimes even in a dark day I have thought them as bright as I ever saw them. Looking westward, their colors are lost in a blaze of light; but in other directions the whole forest is a flower-garden, in which these late roses burn, alternating with green, while the so-called "gardeners," walking here

and there, perchance, beneath, with spade and water-pot, see only a few little asters amid withered leaves.

These are *my* China-asters, *my* late garden-flowers. It costs me nothing for a gardener. The falling leaves, all over the forest, are protecting the roots of my plants. Only look at what is to be seen, and you will have garden enough, without deepening the soil in your yard. We have only to elevate our view a little, to see the whole forest as a garden. The blossoming of the scarlet oak, — the forest-flower, surpassing all in splendor (at least since the maple)! I do not know but they interest me more than the maples, they are so widely and equally dispersed throughout the forest; they are so hardy, a nobler tree on the whole; our chief November flower, abiding the approach of winter with us, imparting warmth to early November prospects. It is remarkable that the latest bright color that is general should be this deep, dark scarlet and red, the intensest of colors. The ripest fruit of the year; like the cheek of a hard, glossy red apple, from the cold Isle of Orleans, which will not be mellow for eating till next spring! When I rise to a hilltop, a thousand of these great oak roses, distributed on every side, as far as the horizon! I admire them four or five miles off! This my unfailing prospect for a fortnight past! This late forest-flower surpasses all that spring or summer could do. Their colors were but rare and dainty specks comparatively (created for the near-sighted, who walk amid the humblest herbs and under-woods), and made no impression on a distant eye. Now it is an extended forest or a mountain-side, through or along which we journey from day to day, that bursts

into bloom. Comparatively, our gardening is on a petty scale, — the gardener still nursing a few asters amid dead weeds, ignorant of the gigantic asters and roses which, as it were, overshadow him, and ask for none of his care. It is like a little red paint ground on a saucer, and held up against the sunset sky. Why not take more elevated and broader views, walk in the great garden; not skulk in a little “debauched” nook of it? consider the beauty of the forest, and not merely of a few impounded herbs?

Let your walks now be a little more adventurous; ascend the hills. If, about the last of October, you ascend any hill in the outskirts of our town, and probably of yours, and look over the forest, you may see — well, what I have endeavored to describe. All this you surely *will* see, and much more, if you are prepared to see it, — if you *look* for it. Otherwise, regular and universal as this phenomenon is, whether you stand on the hilltop or in the hollow, you will think for threescore years and ten that all the wood is, at this season, sere and brown. Objects are concealed from our view, not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them; for there is no power to see in the eye itself, any more than in any other jelly. We do not realize how far and widely, or how near and narrowly, we are to look. The greater part of the phenomena of Nature are for this reason concealed from us all our lives. The gardener sees only the gardener’s garden. Here, too, as in political economy, the supply answers to the demand. Nature does not cast pearls before

swine. There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate, — not a grain more. The actual objects which one man will see from a particular hilltop are just as different from those which another will see as the beholders are different. The scarlet oak must, in a sense, be in your eye when you go forth. We cannot see anything until we are possessed with the idea of it, take it into our heads, — and then we can hardly see anything else. In my botanical rambles I find that, first, the idea, or image, of a plant occupies my thoughts, though it may seem very foreign to this locality, — no nearer than Hudson's Bay, — and for some weeks or months I go thinking of it, and expecting it, unconsciously, and at length I surely see it. This is the history of my finding a score or more of rare plants which I could name. A man sees only what concerns him. A botanist absorbed in the study of grasses does not distinguish the grandest pasture oaks. He, as it were, tramples down oaks unwittingly in his walk, or at most sees only their shadows. I have found that it required a different intention of the eye, in the same locality, to see different plants, even when they were closely allied, as *Juncaceae* and *Gramineae*: when I was looking for the former, I did not see the latter in the midst of them. How much more, then, it requires different intentions of the eye and of the mind to attend to different departments of knowledge! How differently the poet and the naturalist look at objects!

Take a New England selectman, and set him on the highest of our hills, and tell him to look, — sharpening his sight to the utmost, and putting on the glasses that

suit him best (aye, using a spy-glass, if he likes), — and make a full report. What, probably, will he *spy*? — what will he *select* to look at? Of course, he will see a Brocken spectre of himself. He will see several meeting-houses, at least, and, perhaps, that somebody ought to be assessed higher than he is, since he has so handsome a wood-lot. Now take Julius Cæsar, or Emanuel Swedenborg, or a Fiji-Islander, and set him up there. Or suppose all together, and let them compare notes afterward. Will it appear that they have enjoyed the same prospect? What they will see will be as different as Rome was from heaven or hell, or the last from the Fiji Islands. For aught we know, as strange a man as any of these is always at our elbow.

Why, it takes a sharpshooter to bring down even such trivial game as snipes and woodcocks; he must take very particular aim, and know what he is aiming at. He would stand a very small chance, if he fired at random into the sky, being told that snipes were flying there. And so is it with him that shoots at beauty; though he wait till the sky falls, he will not bag any, if he does not already know its seasons and haunts, and the color of its wing, — if he has not dreamed of it, so that he can *anticipate* it; then, indeed, he flushes it at every step, shoots double and on the wing, with both barrels, even in corn-fields. The sportsman trains himself, dresses, and watches unweariedly, and loads and primes for his particular game. He prays for it, and offers sacrifices, and so he gets it. After due and long preparation, schooling his eye and hand, dreaming awake and asleep, with gun and paddle and boat, he

goes out after meadow-hens, which most of his townsmen never saw nor dreamed of, and paddles for miles against a head wind, and wades in water up to his knees, being out all day without his dinner, and *therefore* he gets them. He had them half-way into his bag when he started, and has only to shove them down. The true sportsman can shoot you almost any of his game from his windows: what else has he windows or eyes for? It comes and perches at last on the barrel of his gun; but the rest of the world never see it *with the feathers on*. The geese fly exactly under his zenith, and honk when they get there, and he will keep himself supplied by firing up his chimney; twenty musquash have the refusal of each one of his traps before it is empty. If he lives, and his game spirit increases, heaven and earth shall fail him sooner than game; and when he dies, he will go to more extensive and, perchance, happier hunting-grounds. The fisherman, too, dreams of fish, sees a bobbing cork in his dreams, till he can almost catch them in his sink-spout. I knew a girl who, being sent to pick huckleberries, picked wild gooseberries by the quart, where no one else knew that there were any, because she was accustomed to pick them up-country where she came from. The astronomer knows where to go star-gathering, and sees one clearly in his mind before any have seen it with a glass. The hen scratches and finds her food right under where she stands; but such is not the way with the hawk.

These bright leaves which I have mentioned are not the exception, but the rule; for I believe that all leaves,

even grasses and mosses, acquire brighter colors just before their fall. When you come to observe faithfully the changes of each humblest plant, you find that each has, sooner or later, its peculiar autumnal tint; and if you undertake to make a complete list of the bright tints, it will be nearly as long as a catalogue of the plants in your vicinity.

WILD APPLES

THE HISTORY OF THE APPLE TREE

IT is remarkable how closely the history of the apple tree is connected with that of man. The geologist tells us that the order of the *Rosaceae*, which includes the apple, also the true grasses, and the *Labiatae*, or mints, were introduced only a short time previous to the appearance of man on the globe.

It appears that apples made a part of the food of that unknown primitive people whose traces have lately been found at the bottom of the Swiss lakes, supposed to be older than the foundation of Rome, so old that they had no metallic implements. An entire black and shriveled crab-apple has been recovered from their stores.

Tacitus says of the ancient Germans that they satisfied their hunger with wild apples (*agrestia poma*), among other things.

Niebuhr observes that "the words for a house, a field, a plow, plowing, wine, oil, milk, sheep, apples, and others relating to agriculture and the gentler way of life, agree in Latin and Greek, while the Latin words for all objects pertaining to war or the chase are utterly alien from the Greek." Thus the apple tree may be considered a symbol of peace no less than the olive.

The apple was early so important, and generally distributed, that its name traced to its root in many lan-

guages signifies fruit in general. *Μῆλον*, in Greek, means an apple, also the fruit of other trees, also a sheep and any cattle, and finally riches in general.

The apple tree has been celebrated by the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Scandinavians. Some have thought that the first human pair were tempted by its fruit. Goddesses are fabled to have contended for it, dragons were set to watch it, and heroes were employed to pluck it.

The tree is mentioned in at least three places in the Old Testament, and its fruit in two or three more. Solomon sings, "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." And again, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples." The noblest part of man's noblest feature is named from this fruit, "the apple of the eye."

The apple tree is also mentioned by Homer and Herodotus. Ulysses saw in the glorious garden of Alcinoüs "pears and pomegranates, and apple trees bearing beautiful fruit" (*καὶ μηλέαι ἀγλαόκαρποι*). And according to Homer, apples were among the fruits which Tantalus could not pluck, the wind ever blowing their boughs away from him. Theophrastus knew and described the apple tree as a botanist.

According to the Prose Edda, "Iduna keeps in a box the apples which the gods, when they feel old age approaching, have only to taste of to become young again. It is in this manner that they will be kept in renovated youth until Ragnarök" (or the destruction of the gods).

I learn from Loudon that "the ancient Welsh bards were rewarded for excelling in song by the token of the

apple-spray;" and "in the Highlands of Scotland the apple-tree is the badge of the clan Lamont."

The apple tree (*Pyrus malus*) belongs chiefly to the northern temperate zone. Loudon says that "it grows spontaneously in every part of Europe except the frigid zone, and throughout Western Asia, China, and Japan." We have also two or three varieties of the apple indigenous in North America. The cultivated apple tree was first introduced into this country by the earliest settlers, and is thought to do as well or better here than anywhere else. Probably some of the varieties which are now cultivated were first introduced into Britain by the Romans.

Pliny, adopting the distinction of Theophrastus, says, "Of trees there are some which are altogether wild (*sylvestres*), some more civilized (*urbaniores*)." Theophrastus includes the apple among the last; and, indeed, it is in this sense the most civilized of all trees. It is as harmless as a dove, as beautiful as a rose, and as valuable as flocks and herds. It has been longer cultivated than any other, and so is more humanized; and who knows but, like the dog, it will at length be no longer traceable to its wild original? It migrates with man, like the dog and horse and cow: first, perchance, from Greece to Italy, thence to England, thence to America; and our Western emigrant is still marching steadily toward the setting sun with the seeds of the apple in his pocket, or perhaps a few young trees strapped to his load. At least a million apple trees are thus set farther westward this year than any cultivated ones grew last year. Consider how the Blossom Week,

like the Sabbath, is thus annually spreading over the prairies; for when man migrates, he carries with him not only his birds, quadrupeds, insects, vegetables, and his very sward, but his orchard also.

The leaves and tender twigs are an agreeable food to many domestic animals, as the cow, horse, sheep, and goat; and the fruit is sought after by the first, as well as by the hog. Thus there appears to have existed a natural alliance between these animals and this tree from the first. "The fruit of the crab in the forests of France" is said to be "a great resource for the wild boar."

Not only the Indian, but many indigenous insects, birds, and quadrupeds, welcomed the apple tree to these shores. The tent caterpillar saddled her eggs on the very first twig that was formed, and it has since shared her affections with the wild cherry; and the canker-worm also in a measure abandoned the elm to feed on it. As it grew apace, the bluebird, robin, cherry-bird, kingbird, and many more came with haste and built their nests and warbled in its boughs, and so became orchard-birds, and multiplied more than ever. It was an era in the history of their race. The downy woodpecker found such a savory morsel under its bark that he perforated it in a ring quite round the tree, before he left it, — a thing which he had never done before, to my knowledge. It did not take the partridge long to find out how sweet its buds were, and every winter eve she flew, and still flies, from the wood, to pluck them, much to the farmer's sorrow. The rabbit, too, was not slow to learn the taste of its twigs and bark;

and when the fruit was ripe, the squirrel half rolled, half carried it to his hole; and even the musquash crept up the bank from the brook at evening, and greedily devoured it, until he had worn a path in the grass there; and when it was frozen and thawed, the crow and the jay were glad to taste it occasionally. The owl crept into the first apple tree that became hollow, and fairly hooted with delight, finding it just the place for him; so, settling down into it, he has remained there ever since.

My theme being the Wild Apple, I will merely glance at some of the seasons in the annual growth of the cultivated apple, and pass on to my special province.

The flowers of the apple are perhaps the most beautiful of any tree's, so copious and so delicious to both sight and scent. The walker is frequently tempted to turn and linger near some more than usually handsome one, whose blossoms are two-thirds expanded. How superior it is in these respects to the pear, whose blossoms are neither colored nor fragrant!

By the middle of July, green apples are so large as to remind us of coddling, and of the autumn. The sward is commonly strewed with little ones which fall still-born, as it were, — Nature thus thinning them for us. The Roman writer Palladius said, "If apples are inclined to fall before their time, a stone placed in a split root will retain them." Some such notion, still surviving, may account for some of the stones which we see placed, to be overgrown, in the forks of trees. They have a saying in Suffolk, England, —

"At Michaelmas time, or a little before,
Half an apple goes to the core."

Early apples begin to be ripe about the first of August; but I think that none of them are so good to eat as some to smell. One is worth more to scent your handkerchief with than any perfume which they sell in the shops. The fragrance of some fruits is not to be forgotten, along with that of flowers. Some gnarly apple which I pick up in the road reminds me by its fragrance of all the wealth of Pomona, — carrying me forward to those days when they will be collected in golden and ruddy heaps in the orchards and about the cider-mills.

A week or two later, as you are going by orchards or gardens, especially in the evenings, you pass through a little region possessed by the fragrance of ripe apples, and thus enjoy them without price, and without robbing anybody.

There is thus about all natural products a certain volatile and ethereal quality which represents their highest value, and which cannot be vulgarized, or bought and sold. No mortal has ever enjoyed the perfect flavor of any fruit, and only the godlike among men begin to taste its ambrosial qualities. For nectar and ambrosia are only those fine flavors of every earthly fruit which our coarse palates fail to perceive, — just as we occupy the heaven of the gods without knowing it. When I see a particularly mean man carrying a load of fair and fragrant early apples to market, I seem to see a contest going on between him and his horse, on the one side, and the apples on the other, and, to my mind, the apples always gain it. Pliny says that apples are the heaviest of all things, and that the oxen begin to sweat at the mere sight of a load of them. Our driver

begins to lose his load the moment he tries to transport them to where they do not belong, that is, to any but the most beautiful. Though he gets out from time to time, and feels of them, and thinks they are all there, I see the stream of their evanescent and celestial qualities going to heaven from his cart, while the pulp and skin and core only are going to market. They are not apples, but pomace. Are not these still Iduna's apples, the taste of which keeps the gods forever young? and think you that they will let Loki or Thjassi carry them off to Jötunheim, while they grow wrinkled and gray? No, for Ragnarök, or the destruction of the gods, is not yet.

There is another thinning of the fruit, commonly near the end of August or in September, when the ground is strewn with windfalls; and this happens especially when high winds occur after rain. In some orchards you may see fully three quarters of the whole crop on the ground, lying in a circular form beneath the trees, yet hard and green, or, if it is a hillside, rolled far down the hill. However, it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. All the country over, people are busy picking up the windfalls, and this will make them cheap for early apple pies.

In October, the leaves falling, the apples are more distinct on the trees. I saw one year in a neighboring town some trees fuller of fruit than I remember to have ever seen before, small yellow apples hanging over the road. The branches were gracefully drooping with their weight, like a barberry bush, so that the whole tree acquired a new character. Even the topmost branches,

instead of standing erect, spread and drooped in all directions; and there were so many poles supporting the lower ones that they looked like pictures of banyan trees. As an old English manuscript says, "The mo appelen the tree bereth the more sche boweth to the folk."

Surely the apple is the noblest of fruits. Let the most beautiful or the swiftest have it. That should be the "going" price of apples.

Between the 5th and 20th of October I see the barrels lie under the trees. And perhaps I talk with one who is selecting some choice barrels to fulfill an order. He turns a specked one over many times before he leaves it out. If I were to tell what is passing in my mind, I should say that every one was specked which he had handled; for he rubs off all the bloom, and those fugacious ethereal qualities leave it. Cool evenings prompt the farmers to make haste, and at length I see only the ladders here and there left leaning against the trees.

It would be well, if we accepted these gifts with more joy and gratitude, and did not think it enough simply to put a fresh load of compost about the tree. Some old English customs are suggestive at least. I find them described chiefly in Brand's "Popular Antiquities." It appears that "on Christmas Eve the farmers and their men in Devonshire take a large bowl of cider, with a toast in it, and carrying it in state to the orchard, they salute the apple-trees with much ceremony, in order to make them bear well the next season." This salutation consists in "throwing some of the cider about the roots of the tree, placing bits of the toast on

the branches," and then, "encircling one of the best bearing trees in the orchard, they drink the following toast three several times: —

'Here's to thee, old apple tree,
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow,
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow!
Hats-full! caps-full!
Bushel, bushel, sacks-full!
And my pockets full, too! Hurra!"

Also what was called "apple-howling" used to be practiced in various counties of England on New Year's Eve. A troop of boys visited the different orchards, and, encircling the apple trees, repeated the following words: —

"Stand fast, root! bear well, top!
Pray God send us a good howling crop:
Every twig, apples big;
Every bough, apples enow!"

"They then shout in chorus, one of the boys accompanying them on a cow's horn. During this ceremony they rap the trees with their sticks." This is called "wassailing" the trees, and is thought by some to be "a relic of the heathen sacrifice to Pomona."

Herrick sings, —

"Wassaile the trees that they may beare
You many a plum and many a peare;
For more or less fruits they will bring
As you so give them wassailing."

Our poets have as yet a better right to sing of cider than of wine; but it behooves them to sing better than English Phillips did, else they will do no credit to their Muse.

THE WILD APPLE

So much for the more civilized apple trees (*urbani-ores*, as Pliny calls them). I love better to go through the old orchards of ungrafted appletrees, at what ever season of the year, — so irregularly planted: sometimes two trees standing close together; and the rows so devious that you would think that they not only had grown while the owner was sleeping, but had been set out by him in a somnambulic state. The rows of grafted fruit will never tempt me to wander amid them like these. But I now, alas, speak rather from memory than from any recent experience, such ravages have been made!

Some soils, like a rocky tract called the Easterbrooks Country in my neighborhood, are so suited to the apple, that it will grow faster in them without any care, or if only the ground is broken up once a year, than it will in many places with any amount of care. The owners of this tract allow that the soil is excellent for fruit, but they say that it is so rocky that they have not patience to plow it, and that, together with the distance, is the reason why it is not cultivated. There are, or were recently, extensive orchards there standing without order. Nay, they spring up wild and bear well there in the midst of pines, birches, maples, and oaks. I am often surprised to see rising amid these trees the rounded tops of apple trees glowing with red or yellow fruit, in harmony with the autumnal tints of the forest.

Going up the side of a cliff about the first of November, I saw a vigorous young apple tree, which, planted

by birds or cows, had shot up amid the rocks and open woods there, and had now much fruit on it, uninjured by the frosts, when all cultivated apples were gathered. It was a rank, wild growth, with many green leaves on it still, and made an impression of thorniness. The fruit was hard and green, but looked as if it would be palatable in the winter. Some was dangling on the twigs, but more half buried in the wet leaves under the tree, or rolled far down the hill amid the rocks. The owner knows nothing of it. The day was not observed when it first blossomed, nor when it first bore fruit, unless by the chickadee. There was no dancing on the green beneath it in its honor, and now there is no hand to pluck its fruit, — which is only gnawed by squirrels, as I perceive. It has done double duty, — not only borne this crop, but each twig has grown a foot into the air. And this is *such* fruit! bigger than many berries, we must admit, and carried home will be sound and palatable next spring. What care I for Iduna's apples so long as I can get these?

When I go by this shrub thus late and hardy, and see its dangling fruit, I respect the tree, and I am grateful for Nature's bounty, even though I cannot eat it. Here on this rugged and woody hillside has grown an apple tree, not planted by man, no relic of a former orchard, but a natural growth, like the pines and oaks. Most fruits which we prize and use depend entirely on our care. Corn and grain, potatoes, peaches, melons, etc., depend altogether on our planting; but the apple emulates man's independence and enterprise. It is not simply carried, as I have said, but, like him, to some extent,

it has migrated to this New World, and is even, here and there, making its way amid the aboriginal trees; just as the ox and dog and horse sometimes run wild and maintain themselves.

Even the sourest and crabbedest apple, growing in the most unfavorable position, suggests such thoughts as these, it is so noble a fruit.

THE CRAB

Nevertheless, *our* wild apple is wild only like myself, perchance, who belong not to the aboriginal race here, but have strayed into the woods from the cultivated stock. Wilder still, as I have said, there grows elsewhere in this country a native and aboriginal crab-apple, *Malus coronaria*, "whose nature has not yet been modified by cultivation." It is found from western New York to Minnesota, and southward. Michaux says that its ordinary height "is fifteen or eighteen feet, but it is sometimes found twenty-five or thirty feet high," and that the large ones "exactly resemble the common apple tree." "The flowers are white mingled with rose color, and are collected in corymbs." They are remarkable for their delicious odor. The fruit, according to him, is about an inch and a half in diameter, and is intensely acid. Yet they make fine sweetmeats and also cider of them. He concludes that "if, on being cultivated, it does not yield new and palatable varieties, it will at least be celebrated for the beauty of its flowers, and for the sweetness of its perfume."

I never saw the crab-apple till May, 1861. I had heard of it through Michaux, but more modern bota-

nists, so far as I know, have not treated it as of any peculiar importance. Thus it was a half-fabulous tree to me. I contemplated a pilgrimage to the "Glades," a portion of Pennsylvania where it was said to grow to perfection. I thought of sending to a nursery for it, but doubted if they had it, or would distinguish it from European varieties. At last I had occasion to go to Minnesota, and on entering Michigan I began to notice from the cars a tree with handsome rose-colored flowers. At first I thought it some variety of thorn; but it was not long before the truth flashed on me, that this was my long-sought crab-apple. It was the prevailing flowering shrub or tree to be seen from the cars at that season of the year, — about the middle of May. But the cars never stopped before one, and so I was launched on the bosom of the Mississippi without having touched one, experiencing the fate of Tantalus. On arriving at St. Anthony's Falls, I was sorry to be told that I was too far north for the crab-apple. Nevertheless I succeeded in finding it about eight miles west of the Falls; touched it and smelled it, and secured a lingering corymb of flowers for my herbarium. This must have been near its northern limit.

HOW THE WILD APPLE GROWS

But though these are indigenous, like the Indians, I doubt whether they are any hardier than those backwoodsmen among the apple trees, which, though descended from cultivated stocks, plant themselves in distant fields and forests, where the soil is favorable to them. I know of no trees which have more difficulties

to contend with, and which more sturdily resist their foes. These are the ones whose story we have to tell. It oftentimes reads thus:—

Near the beginning of May, we notice little thickets of apple trees just springing up in the pastures where cattle have been,—as the rocky ones of our Easter-brooks Country, or the top of Nobscot Hill, in Sudbury. One or two of these, perhaps, survive the drought and other accidents,—their very birthplace defending them against the encroaching grass and some other dangers, at first.

In two years' time 't had thus
Reached the level of the rocks,
Admired the stretching world,
Nor feared the wandering flocks.

But at this tender age
Its sufferings began:
There came a browsing ox
And cut it down a span.

This time, perhaps, the ox does not notice it amid the grass; but the next year, when it has grown more stout, he recognizes it for a fellow-emigrant from the old country, the flavor of whose leaves and twigs he well knows; and though at first he pauses to welcome it, and express his surprise, and gets for answer, "The same cause that brought you here brought me," he nevertheless browses it again, reflecting, it may be, that he has some title to it.

Thus cut down annually, it does not despair; but, putting forth two short twigs for every one cut off, it spreads out low along the ground in the hollows or

between the rocks, growing more stout and scrubby, until it forms, not a tree as yet, but a little pyramidal, stiff, twiggy mass, almost as solid and impenetrable as a rock. Some of the densest and most impenetrable clumps of bushes that I have ever seen, as well on account of the closeness and stubbornness of their branches as of their thorns, have been these wild apple scrubs. They are more like the scrubby fir and black spruce on which you stand, and sometimes walk, on the tops of mountains, where cold is the demon they contend with, than anything else. No wonder they are prompted to grow thorns at last, to defend themselves against such foes. In their thorniness, however, there is no malice, only some malic acid.

The rocky pastures of the tract I have referred to -- for they maintain their ground best in a rocky field -- are thickly sprinkled with these little tufts, reminding you often of some rigid gray mosses or lichens, and you see thousands of little trees just springing up between them, with the seed still attached to them.

Being regularly clipped all around each year by the cows, as a hedge with shears, they are often of a perfect conical or pyramidal form, from one to four feet high, and more or less sharp, as if trimmed by the gardener's art. In the pastures on Nobscot Hill and its spurs, they make fine dark shadows when the sun is low. They are also an excellent covert from hawks for many small birds that roost and build in them. Whole flocks perch in them at night, and I have seen three robins' nests in one which was six feet in diameter.

No doubt many of these are already old trees, if you

reckon from the day they were planted, but infants still when you consider their development and the long life before them. I counted the annual rings of some which were just one foot high, and as wide as high, and found that they were about twelve years old, but quite sound and thrifty! They were so low that they were unnoticed by the walker, while many of their contemporaries from the nurseries were already bearing considerable crops. But what you gain in time is perhaps in this case, too, lost in power, — that is, in the vigor of the tree. This is their pyramidal state.

The cows continue to browse them thus for twenty years or more, keeping them down and compelling them to spread, until at last they are so broad that they become their own fence, when some interior shoot, which their foes cannot reach, darts upward with joy: for it has not forgotten its high calling, and bears its own peculiar fruit in triumph.

Such are the tactics by which it finally defeats its bovine foes. Now, if you have watched the progress of a particular shrub, you will see that it is no longer a simple pyramid or cone, but that out of its apex there rises a sprig or two, growing more lustily perchance than an orchard-tree, since the plant now devotes the whole of its repressed energy to these upright parts. In a short time these become a small tree, an inverted pyramid resting on the apex of the other, so that the whole has now the form of a vast hour-glass. The spreading bottom, having served its purpose, finally disappears, and the generous tree permits the now harmless cows to come in and stand in its shade, and

rub against and redden its trunk, which has grown in spite of them, and even to taste a part of its fruit, and so disperse the seed.

Thus the cows create their own shade and food; and the tree, its hour-glass being inverted, lives a second life, as it were.

It is an important question with some nowadays, whether you should trim young apple trees as high as your nose or as high as your eyes. The ox trims them up as high as he can reach, and that is about the right height, I think.

In spite of wandering kine, and other adverse circumstances, that despised shrub, valued only by small birds as a covert and shelter from hawks, has its blossom week at last, and in course of time its harvest, sincere, though small.

By the end of some October, when its leaves have fallen, I frequently see such a central sprig, whose progress I have watched, when I thought it had forgotten its destiny, as I had, bearing its first crop of small green or yellow or rosy fruit, which the cows cannot get at over the bushy and thorny hedge which surrounds it, and I make haste to taste the new and undescribed variety. We have all heard of the numerous varieties of fruit invented by Van Mons and Knight. This is the system of Van Cow, and she has invented far more and more memorable varieties than both of them.

Through what hardships it may attain to bear a sweet fruit! Though somewhat small, it may prove equal, if not superior, in flavor to that which has grown in a garden, — will perchance be all the sweeter and

more palatable for the very difficulties it has had to contend with. Who knows but this chance wild fruit, planted by a cow or a bird on some remote and rocky hillside, where it is as yet unobserved by man, may be the choicest of all its kind, and foreign potentates shall hear of it, and royal societies seek to propagate it, though the virtues of the perhaps truly crabbed owner of the soil may never be heard of, — at least, beyond the limits of his village? It was thus the Porter and the Baldwin grew.

Every wild apple shrub excites our expectation thus, somewhat as every wild child. It is, perhaps, a prince in disguise. What a lesson to man! So are human beings, referred to the highest standard, the celestial fruit which they suggest and aspire to bear, browsed on by fate; and only the most persistent and strongest genius defends itself and prevails, sends a tender scion upward at last, and drops its perfect fruit on the ungrateful earth. Poets and philosophers and statesmen thus spring up in the country pastures, and outlast the hosts of unoriginal men.

Such is always the pursuit of knowledge. The celestial fruits, the golden apples of the Hesperides, are ever guarded by a hundred-headed dragon which never sleeps, so that it is an Herculean labor to pluck them.

This is one, and the most remarkable way in which the wild apple is propagated; but commonly it springs up at wide intervals in woods and swamp, and by the sides of roads, as the soil may suit it, and grows with comparative rapidity. Those which grow in dense woods are very tall and slender. I frequently pluck

from these trees a perfectly mild and tamed fruit. As Palladius says, "*Et injussu consternitur ubere mali:*" And the ground is strewn with the fruit of an unbidden apple tree.

It is an old notion that, if these wild trees do not bear a valuable fruit of their own, they are the best stocks by which to transmit to posterity the most highly prized qualities of others. However, I am not in search of stocks, but the wild fruit itself, whose fierce gust has suffered no "inteneration." It is not my

"highest plot
To plant the Bergamot."

THE FRUIT, AND ITS FLAVOR

The time for wild apples is the last of October and the first of November. They then get to be palatable, for they ripen late, and they are still perhaps as beautiful as ever. I make a great account of these fruits, which the farmers do not think it worth the while to gather, — wild flavors of the Muse, vivacious and inspiring. The farmer thinks that he has better in his barrels, but he is mistaken, unless he has a walker's appetite and imagination, neither of which can he have.

Such as grow quite wild, and are left out till the first of November, I presume that the owner does not mean to gather. They belong to children as wild as themselves, — to certain active boys that I know, — to the wild-eyed woman of the fields, to whom nothing comes amiss, who gleans after all the world, and, moreover, to us walkers. We have met with them, and they are ours. These rights, long enough insisted upon, have come

to be an institution in some old countries, where they have learned how to live. I hear that "the custom of grippling, which may be called apple-gleaning, is, or was formerly, practiced in Herefordshire. It consists in leaving a few apples, which are called the gripples, on every tree, after the general gathering, for the boys, who go with climbing-poles and bags to collect them."

As for those I speak of, I pluck them as a wild fruit, native to this quarter of the earth, — fruit of old trees that have been dying ever since I was a boy and are not yet dead, frequented only by the woodpecker and the squirrel, deserted now by the owner, who has not faith enough to look under their boughs. From the appearance of the tree-top, at a little distance, you would expect nothing but lichens to drop from it, but your faith is rewarded by finding the ground strewn with spirited fruit, — some of it, perhaps, collected at squirrel-holes, with the marks of their teeth by which they carried them, — some containing a cricket or two silently feeding within, and some, especially in damp days, a shell-less snail. The very sticks and stones lodged in the tree-top might have convinced you of the savoriness of the fruit which has been so eagerly sought after in past years.

I have seen no account of these among the "Fruits and Fruit-Trees of America," though they are more memorable to my taste than the grafted kinds; more racy and wild American flavors do they possess when October and November, when December and January, and perhaps February and March even, have assuaged them somewhat. An old farmer in my neighborhood,

who always selects the right word, says that "they have a kind of bow-arrow tang."

Apples for grafting appear to have been selected commonly, not so much for their spirited flavor, as for their mildness, their size, and bearing qualities, — not so much for their beauty, as for their fairness and soundness. Indeed, I have no faith in the selected lists of pomological gentlemen. Their "Favorites" and "None-suches" and "Seek-no-farthens," when I have fruited them, commonly turn out very tame and forgettable. They are eaten with comparatively little zest, and have no real *tang* nor *smack* to them.

What if some of these wildings are acrid and puckery, genuine *verjuice*, do they not still belong to the *Pomaceæ*, which are uniformly innocent and kind to our race? I still begrudge them to the cider-mill. Perhaps they are not fairly ripe yet.

No wonder that these small and high-colored apples are thought to make the best cider. Loudon quotes from the "Herefordshire Report," that "apples of a small size are always, if equal in quality, to be preferred to those of a larger size, in order that the rind and kernel may bear the greatest proportion to the pulp, which affords the weakest and most watery juice." And he says that, "to prove this, Dr. Symonds, of Hereford, about the year 1800, made one hogshead of cider entirely from the rinds and cores of apples, and another from the pulp only, when the first was found of extraordinary strength and flavor, while the latter was sweet and insipid."

Evelyn says that the "Red-strake" was the favorite cider-apple in his day; and he quotes one Dr. Newburg

as saying, "In Jersey 't is a general observation, as I hear, that the more of red any apple has in its rind, the more proper it is for this use. Pale-faced apples they exclude as much as may be from their cider-vat." This opinion still prevails.

All apples are good in November. Those which the farmer leaves out as unsalable and unpalatable to those who frequent the markets are choicest fruit to the walker. But it is remarkable that the wild apple, which I praise as so spirited and racy when eaten in the fields or woods, being brought into the house has frequently a harsh and crabbed taste. The Saunterer's Apple not even the saunterer can eat in the house. The palate rejects it there, as it does haws and acorns, and demands a tamed one; for there you miss the November air, which is the sauce it is to be eaten with. Accordingly, when Tityrus, seeing the lengthening shadows, invites Melibœus to go home and pass the night with him, he promises him *mild* apples and soft chestnuts, — *mitia poma, castaneæ molles*. I frequently pluck wild apples of so rich and spicy a flavor that I wonder all orchardists do not get a scion from that tree, and I fail not to bring home my pockets full. But perchance, when I take one out of my desk and taste it in my chamber, I find it unexpectedly crude, — sour enough to set a squirrel's teeth on edge and make a jay scream.

These apples have hung in the wind and frost and rain till they have absorbed the qualities of the weather or season, and thus are highly *seasoned*, and they *pierce* and *sting* and *permeate* us with their spirit. They must be eaten in *season*, accordingly, — that is, out-of-doors.

To appreciate the wild and sharp flavors of these October fruits, it is necessary that you be breathing the sharp October or November air. The outdoor air and exercise which the walker gets give a different tone to his palate, and he craves a fruit which the sedentary would call harsh and crabbed. They must be eaten in the fields, when your system is all aglow with exercise, when the frosty weather nips your fingers, the wind rattles the bare boughs or rustles the few remaining leaves, and the jay is heard screaming around. What is sour in the house a bracing walk makes sweet. Some of these apples might be labeled, "To be eaten in the wind."

Of course no flavors are thrown away; they are intended for the taste that is up to them. Some apples have two distinct flavors, and perhaps one half of them must be eaten in the house, the other outdoors. One Peter Whitney wrote from Northborough in 1782, for the Proceedings of the Boston Academy, describing an apple tree in that town "producing fruit of opposite qualities, part of the same apple being frequently sour and the other sweet;" also some all sour, and others all sweet, and this diversity on all parts of the tree.

There is a wild apple on Nawshawtuct Hill in my town which has to me a peculiarly pleasant bitter tang, not perceived till it is three-quarters tasted. It remains on the tongue. As you eat it, it smells exactly like a squash-bug. It is a sort of triumph to eat and relish it.

I hear that the fruit of a kind of plum tree in Provence is "called *Prunes sibarelles*, because it is impossible to whistle after having eaten them, from their sourness."

But perhaps they were only eaten in the house and in summer, and if tried out-of-doors in a stinging atmosphere, who knows but you could whistle an octave higher and clearer?

In the fields only are the sours and bitters of Nature appreciated; just as the woodchopper eats his meal in a sunny glade, in the middle of a winter day, with content, basks in a sunny ray there, and dreams of summer in a degree of cold which, experienced in a chamber, would make a student miserable. They who are at work abroad are not cold, but rather it is they who sit shivering in houses. As with temperatures, so with flavors; as with cold and heat, so with sour and sweet. This natural raciness, the sours and bitters which the diseased palate refuses, are the true condiments.

Let your condiments be in the condition of your senses. To appreciate the flavor of these wild apples requires vigorous and healthy senses, *papillæ* firm and erect on the tongue and palate, not easily flattened and tamed.

From my experience with wild apples, I can understand that there may be reason for a savage's preferring many kinds of food which the civilized man rejects. The former has the palate of an outdoor man. It takes a savage or wild taste to appreciate a wild fruit.

What a healthy out-of-door appetite it takes to relish the apple of life, the apple of the world, then!

"Nor is it every apple I desire,
Nor that which pleases every palate best;
'T is not the lasting Deuxan I require,
Nor yet the red-cheeked Greening I request,

Nor that which first beshrewed the name of wife,
Nor that whose beauty caused the golden strife:
No, no! bring me an apple from the tree of life."

So there is one *thought* for the field, another for the house. I would have my thoughts, like wild apples, to be food for walkers, and will not warrant them to be palatable if tasted in the house.

THEIR BEAUTY

Almost all wild apples are handsome. They cannot be too gnarly and crabbed and rusty to look at. The gnarliest will have some redeeming traits even to the eye. You will discover some evening redness dashed or sprinkled on some protuberance or in some cavity. It is rare that the summer lets an apple go without streaking or spotting it on some part of its sphere. It will have some red stains, commemorating the mornings and evenings it has witnessed; some dark and rusty blotches, in memory of the clouds and foggy, mildewy days that have passed over it; and a spacious field of green reflecting the general face of nature, — green even as the fields; or a yellow ground, which implies a milder flavor, — yellow as the harvest, or russet as the hills.

Apples, these I mean, unspeakably fair, — apples not of Discord, but of Concord! Yet not so rare but that the homeliest may have a share. Painted by the frosts, some a uniform clear bright yellow, or red, or crimson, as if their spheres had regularly revolved, and enjoyed the influence of the sun on all sides alike, — some with the faintest pink blush imaginable, — some brindled with deep red streaks like a cow, or with hundreds of fine

blood-red rays running regularly from the stem-dimple to the blossom end, like meridional lines, on a straw-colored ground, — some touched with a greenish rust, like a fine lichen, here and there, with crimson blotches or eyes more or less confluent and fiery when wet, — and others gnarly, and freckled or peppered all over on the stem side with fine crimson spots on a white ground, as if accidentally sprinkled from the brush of Him who paints the autumn leaves. Others, again, are sometimes red inside, perfused with a beautiful blush, fairy food, too beautiful to eat, — apple of the Hesperides, apple of the evening sky! But like shells and pebbles on the seashore, they must be seen as they sparkle amid the withering leaves in some dell in the woods, in the autumnal air, or as they lie in the wet grass, and not when they have wilted and faded in the house.

THE NAMING OF THEM

It would be a pleasant pastime to find suitable names for the hundred varieties which go to a single heap at the cider-mill. Would it not tax a man's invention, — no one to be named after a man, and all in the *lingua vernacula*? Who shall stand godfather at the christening of the wild apples? It would exhaust the Latin and Greek languages, if they were used, and make the *lingua vernacula* flag. We should have to call in the sunrise and the sunset, the rainbow and the autumn woods and the wild-flowers, and the woodpecker and the purple finch and the squirrel and the jay and the butterfly, the November traveler and the truant boy, to our aid.

In 1836 there were in the garden of the London Horticultural Society more than fourteen hundred distinct sorts. But here are species which they have not in their catalogue, not to mention the varieties which our crab might yield to cultivation.

Let us enumerate a few of these. I find myself compelled, after all, to give the Latin names of some for the benefit of those who live where English is not spoken, — for they are likely to have a world-wide reputation.

There is, first of all, the Wood Apple (*Malus sylvatica*); the Blue-Jay Apple; the Apple which grows in Dells in the Woods (*sylvestrivallis*), also in Hollows in Pastures (*campestrivallis*); the Apple that grows in an old Cellar-Hole (*Malus cellaris*); the Meadow Apple; the Partridge Apple; the Truant's Apple (*cessatoris*), which no boy will ever go by without knocking off some, however *late* it may be; the Saunterer's Apple, — you must lose yourself before you can find the way to that; the Beauty of the Air (*decus aëris*); December-Eating; the Frozen-Thawed (*gelato-soluta*), good only in that state; the Concord Apple, possibly the same with the *Musketaquidensis*; the Assabet Apple; the Brindled Apple; Wine of New England; the Chickaree Apple; the Green Apple (*Malus viridis*), — this has many synonyms: in an imperfect state, it is the *choleramorbifera aut dysenterifera, puerulis dilectissima*; the Apple which Atalanta stopped to pick up; the Hedge Apple (*Malus sepium*); the Slug Apple (*limacea*); the Railroad Apple, which perhaps came from a core thrown out of the cars; the Apple whose Fruit we tasted in our Youth; our Particular Apple, not to

be found in any catalogue; *pedestrium solatium*; also the Apple where hangs the Forgotten Scythe; Iduna's Apples, and the Apples which Loki found in the Wood; and a great many more I have on my list, too numerous to mention, — all of them good. As Bodæus exclaims, referring to the cultivated kinds, and adapting Virgil to his case, so I, adapting Bodæus, —

“Not if I had a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths,
An iron voice, could I describe all the forms
And reckon up all the names of these *wild apples*.”

THE LAST GLEANING

By the middle of November the wild apples have lost some of their brilliancy, and have chiefly fallen. A great part are decayed on the ground, and the sound ones are more palatable than before. The note of the chickadee sounds now more distinct, as you wander amid the old trees, and the autumnal dandelion is half closed and tearful. But still, if you are a skillful gleaner, you may get many a pocketful even of grafted fruit, long after apples are supposed to be gone out-of-doors. I know a Blue Pearmain tree, growing within the edge of a swamp, almost as good as wild. You would not suppose that there was any fruit left there, on the first survey, but you must look according to system. Those which lie exposed are quite brown and rotten now, or perchance a few still show one blooming cheek here and there amid the wet leaves. Nevertheless, with experienced eyes, I explore amid the bare alders and the huckleberry bushes and the withered sedge, and in the crevices of the rocks, which are full of leaves, and pry

under the fallen and decaying ferns, which, with apple and alder leaves, thickly strew the ground. For I know that they lie concealed, fallen into hollows long since and covered up by the leaves of the tree itself, — a proper kind of packing. From these lurking-places, anywhere within the circumference of the tree, I draw forth the fruit, all wet and glossy, maybe nibbled by rabbits and hollowed out by crickets, and perhaps with a leaf or two cemented to it (as Curzon an old manuscript from a monastery's mouldy cellar), but still with a rich bloom on it, and at least as ripe and well-kept, if not better than those in barrels, more crisp and lively than they. If these resources fail to yield anything, I have learned to look between the bases of the suckers which spring thickly from some horizontal limb, for now and then one lodges there, or in the very midst of an alder-clump, where they are covered by leaves, safe from cows which may have smelled them out. If I am sharp-set, for I do not refuse the Blue Pearmain, I fill my pockets on each side; and as I retrace my steps in the frosty eve, being perhaps four or five miles from home, I eat one first from this side, and then from that, to keep my balance.

I learn from Topsell's *Gesner*, whose authority appears to be *Albertus*, that the following is the way in which the hedgehog collects and carries home his apples. He says, — "His meat is apples, worms, or grapes: when he findeth apples or grapes on the earth, he rolleth himself upon them, until he have filled all his prickles, and then carrieth them home to his den, never bearing above one in his mouth; and if it fortune that one of

them fall off by the way, he likewise shaketh off all the residue, and walloweth upon them afresh, until they be all settled upon his back again. So, forth he goeth, making a noise like a cart-wheel; and if he have any young ones in his nest, they pull off his load wherewithal he is loaded, eating thereof what they please, and laying up the residue for the time to come."

THE "FROZEN-THAWED" APPLE

Toward the end of November, though some of the sound ones are yet more mellow and perhaps more edible, they have generally, like the leaves, lost their beauty, and are beginning to freeze. It is finger-cold, and prudent farmers get in their barreled apples, and bring you the apples and cider which they have engaged; for it is time to put them into the cellar. Perhaps a few on the ground show their red cheeks above the early snow, and occasionally some even preserve their color and soundness under the snow throughout the winter. But generally at the beginning of the winter they freeze hard, and soon, though undecayed, acquire the color of a baked apple.

Before the end of December, generally, they experience their first thawing. Those which a month ago were sour, crabbed, and quite unpalatable to the civilized taste, such at least as were frozen while sound, let a warmer sun come to thaw them, — for they are extremely sensitive to its rays, — are found to be filled with a rich, sweet cider, better than any bottled cider that I know of, and with which I am better acquainted than with wine. All apples are good in this state, and your jaws

are the cider-press. Others, which have more substance, are a sweet and luscious food, — in my opinion of more worth than the pineapples which are imported from the West Indies. Those which lately even I tasted only to repent of it, — for I am semicivilized, — which the farmer willingly left on the tree, I am now glad to find have the property of hanging on like the leaves of the young oaks. It is a way to keep cider sweet without boiling. Let the frost come to freeze them first, solid as stones, and then the rain or a warm winter day to thaw them, and they will seem to have borrowed a flavor from heaven through the medium of the air in which they hang. Or perchance you find, when you get home, that those which rattled in your pocket have thawed, and the ice is turned to cider. But after the third or fourth freezing and thawing they will not be found so good.

What are the imported half-ripe fruits of the torrid south, to this fruit matured by the cold of the frigid north? These are those crabbed apples with which I cheated my companion, and kept a smooth face that I might tempt him to eat. Now we both greedily fill our pockets with them, — bending to drink the cup and save our lappets from the overflowing juice, — and grow more social with their wine. Was there one that hung so high and sheltered by the tangled branches that our sticks could not dislodge it?

It is a fruit never carried to market, that I am aware of, — quite distinct from the apple of the markets, as from dried apple and cider, — and it is not every winter that produces it in perfection.

The era of the Wild Apple will soon be past. It is a fruit which will probably become extinct in New England. You may still wander through old orchards of native fruit of great extent, which for the most part went to the cider-mill, now all gone to decay. I have heard of an orchard in a distant town, on the side of a hill, where the apples rolled down and lay four feet deep against a wall on the lower side, and this the owner cut down for fear they should be made into cider. Since the temperance reform and the general introduction of grafted fruit, no native apple trees, such as I see everywhere in deserted pastures, and where the woods have grown up around them, are set out. I fear that he who walks over these fields a century hence will not know the pleasure of knocking off wild apples. Ah, poor man, there are many pleasures which he will not know! Notwithstanding the prevalence of the Baldwin and the Porter, I doubt if so extensive orchards are set out to-day in my town as there were a century ago, when those vast straggling cider-orchards were planted, when men both ate and drank apples, when the pomace-heap was the only nursery, and trees cost nothing but the trouble of setting them out. Men could afford then to stick a tree by every wall-side and let it take its chance. I see nobody planting trees to-day in such out of the way places, along the lonely roads and lanes, and at the bottom of dells in the wood. Now that they have grafted trees, and pay a price for them, they collect them into a plat by their houses, and fence them in, — and the end of it all will be that we shall be compelled to look for our apples in a barrel.

This is "The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.

"Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land! Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? . . .

"That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

"Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

"For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white. . . .

"Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers. . . .

"The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men."

NIGHT AND MOONLIGHT

CHANCING to take a memorable walk by moonlight some years ago, I resolved to take more such walks, and make acquaintance with another side of nature: I have done so.

According to Pliny, there is a stone in Arabia called Selenites, "wherein is a white, which increases and decreases with the moon." My journal for the last year or two has been *selenitic* in this sense.

Is not the midnight like Central Africa to most of us? Are we not tempted to explore it, — to penetrate to the shores of its Lake Tchad, and discover the source of its Nile, perchance the Mountains of the Moon? Who knows what fertility and beauty, moral and natural, are there to be found? In the Mountains of the Moon, in the Central Africa of the night, there is where all Niles have their hidden heads. The expeditions up the Nile as yet extend but to the Cataracts, or perchance to the mouth of the White Nile; but it is the Black Nile that concerns us.

I shall be a benefactor if I conquer some realms from the night, if I report to the gazettes anything transpiring about us at that season worthy of their attention, — if I can show men that there is some beauty awake while they are asleep, — if I add to the domains of poetry.

Night is certainly more novel and less profane than day. I soon discovered that I was acquainted only with its complexion, and as for the moon, I had seen her only

as it were through a crevice in a shutter, occasionally. Why not walk a little way in her light?

Suppose you attend to the suggestions which the moon makes for one month, commonly in vain, will it not be very different from anything in literature or religion? But why not study this Sanskrit? What if one moon has come and gone with its world of poetry, its weird teachings, its oracular suggestions, — so divine a creature freighted with hints for me, and I have not used her? One moon gone by unnoticed?

I think it was Dr. Chalmers who said, criticising Coleridge, that for his part he wanted ideas which he could see all round, and not such as he must look at away up in the heavens. Such a man, one would say, would never look at the moon, because she never turns her other side to us. The light which comes from ideas which have their orbit as distant from the earth, and which is no less cheering and enlightening to the benighted traveler than that of the moon and stars, is naturally reproached or nicknamed as moonshine by such. They are moonshine, are they? Well, then, do your night traveling when there is no moon to light you; but I will be thankful for the light that reaches me from the star of least magnitude. Stars are lesser or greater only as they appear to us so. I will be thankful that I see so much as one side of a celestial idea, one side of the rainbow and the sunset sky.

Men talk glibly enough about moonshine, as if they knew its qualities very well, and despised them; as owls might talk of sunshine, — none of your sunshine! — but this word commonly means merely something which

they do not understand, — which they are abed and asleep to, however much it may be worth their while to be up and awake to it.

It must be allowed that the light of the moon, sufficient though it is for the pensive walker, and not disproportionate to the inner light we have, is very inferior in quality and intensity to that of the sun. But the moon is not to be judged alone by the quantity of light she sends to us, but also by her influence on the earth and its inhabitants. "The moon gravitates toward the earth, and the earth reciprocally toward the moon." The poet who walks by moonlight is conscious of a tide in his thought which is to be referred to lunar influence. I will endeavor to separate the tide in my thoughts from the current distractions of the day. I would warn my hearers that they must not try my thoughts by a daylight standard, but endeavor to realize that I speak out of the night. All depends on your point of view. In Drake's "Collection of Voyages," Wafer says of some albinos among the Indians of Darien: "They are quite white, but their whiteness is like that of a horse, quite different from the fair or pale European, as they have not the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion. . . . Their eyebrows are milk-white, as is likewise the hair of their heads, which is very fine. . . . They seldom go abroad in the daytime, the sun being disagreeable to them, and causing their eyes, which are weak and poring, to water, especially if it shines towards them, yet they see very well by moonlight, from which we call them moon-eyed."

Neither in our thoughts in these moonlight walks, methinks, is there "the least tincture of a blush or sanguine complexion," but we are intellectually and morally albinos, children of Endymion, such is the effect of conversing much with the moon.

I complain of arctic voyagers that they do not enough remind us of the constant peculiar dreariness of the scenery, and the perpetual twilight of the arctic night. So he whose theme is moonlight, though he may find it difficult, must, as it were, illustrate it with the light of the moon alone.

Many men walk by day; few walk by night. It is a very different season. Take a July night, for instance. About ten o'clock, — when man is asleep, and day fairly forgotten, — the beauty of moonlight is seen over lonely pastures where cattle are silently feeding. On all sides novelties present themselves. Instead of the sun there are the moon and stars; instead of the wood thrush there is the whip-poor-will; instead of butterflies in the meadows, fireflies, winged sparks of fire! who would have believed it? What kind of cool deliberate life dwells in those dewy abodes associated with a spark of fire? So man has fire in his eyes, or blood, or brain. Instead of singing birds, the half-throttled note of a cuckoo flying over, the croaking of frogs, and the intenser dream of crickets. But above all, the wonderful trump of the bullfrog, ringing from Maine to Georgia. The potato vines stand upright, the corn grows apace, the bushes loom, the grain-fields are boundless. On our open river terraces once cultivated by the Indian, they appear to occupy the ground like

an army, their heads nodding in the breeze. Small trees and shrubs are seen in the midst overwhelmed as by an inundation. The shadows of rocks and trees, and shrubs and hills, are more conspicuous than the objects themselves. The slightest irregularities in the ground are revealed by the shadows, and what the feet find comparatively smooth appears rough and diversified in consequence. For the same reason the whole landscape is more variegated and picturesque than by day. The smallest recesses in the rocks are dim and cavernous; the ferns in the wood appear of tropical size. The sweet-fern and indigo in overgrown wood-paths wet you with dew up to your middle. The leaves of the shrub oak are shining as if a liquid were flowing over them. The pools seen through the trees are as full of light as the sky. "The light of the day takes refuge in their bosoms," as the Purana says of the ocean. All white objects are more remarkable than by day. A distant cliff looks like a phosphorescent space on a hillside. The woods are heavy and dark. Nature slumbers. You see the moonlight reflected from particular stumps in the recesses of the forest, as if she selected what to shine on. These small fractions of her light remind one of the plant called moonseed, — as if the moon were sowing it in such places.

In the night the eyes are partly closed or retire into the head. Other senses take the lead. The walker is guided as well by the sense of smell. Every plant and field and forest emits its odor now, swamp-pink in the meadow and tansy in the road; and there is the peculiar dry scent of corn which has begun to show its

tassels. The senses both of hearing and smelling are more alert. We hear the tinkling of rills which we never detected before. From time to time, high up on the sides of hills, you pass through a stratum of warm air, a blast which has come up from the sultry plains of noon. It tells of the day, of sunny noontide hours and banks, of the laborer wiping his brow and the bee humming amid flowers. It is an air in which work has been done, — which men have breathed. It circulates about from woodside to hillside like a dog that has lost its master, now that the sun is gone. The rocks retain all night the warmth of the sun which they have absorbed. And so does the sand. If you dig a few inches into it you find a warm bed. You lie on your back on a rock in a pasture on the top of some bare hill at midnight, and speculate on the height of the starry canopy. The stars are the jewels of the night, and perchance surpass anything which day has to show. A companion with whom I was sailing one very windy but bright moonlight night, when the stars were few and faint, thought that a man could get along with *them*, though he was considerably reduced in his circumstances, — that they were a kind of bread and cheese that never failed.

No wonder that there have been astrologers, that some have conceived that they were personally related to particular stars. Dubartas, as translated by Sylvester, says he'll

“not believe that the great architect
With all these fires the heavenly arches decked
Only for show, and with these glistering shields,
T' awake poor shepherds, watching in the fields.”

He'll "not believe that the least flower which pranks
Our garden borders, or our common banks,
And the least stone, that in her warming lap
Our mother earth doth covetously wrap,
Hath some peculiar virtue of its own,
And that the glorious stars of heav'n have none."

And Sir Walter Raleigh well says, "The stars are instruments of far greater use than to give an obscure light, and for men to gaze on after sunset;" and he quotes Plotinus as affirming that they "are significant, but not efficient;" and also Augustine as saying, "*Deus regit inferiora corpora per superiora:*" God rules the bodies below by those above. But best of all is this which another writer has expressed: "*Sapiens adjuvabit opus astrorum quemadmodum agricola terrae naturam:*" a wise man assisteth the work of the stars as the husbandman helpeth the nature of the soil.

It does not concern men who are asleep in their beds, but it is very important to the traveler, whether the moon shines brightly or is obscured. It is not easy to realize the serene joy of all the earth, when she commences to shine unobstructedly, unless you have often been abroad alone in moonlight nights. She seems to be waging continual war with the clouds in your behalf. Yet we fancy the clouds to be *her* foes also. She comes on magnifying her dangers by her light, revealing, displaying them in all their hugeness and blackness, then suddenly casts them behind into the light concealed, and goes her way triumphant through a small space of clear sky.

In short, the moon traversing, or appearing to trav-

erse, the small clouds which lie in her way, now obscured by them, now easily dissipating and shining through them, makes the drama of the moonlight night to all watchers and night-travelers. Sailors speak of it as the moon eating up the clouds. The traveler all alone, the moon all alone, except for his sympathy, overcoming with incessant victory whole squadrons of clouds above the forests and lakes and hills. When she is obscured he so sympathizes with her that he could whip a dog for her relief, as Indians do. When she enters on a clear field of great extent in the heavens, and shines unobstructedly, he is glad. And when she has fought her way through all the squadron of her foes, and rides majestic in a clear sky unscathed, and there are no more any obstructions in her path, he cheerfully and confidently pursues his way, and rejoices in his heart, and the cricket also seems to express joy in its song.

How insupportable would be the days, if the night with its dews and darkness did not come to restore the drooping world. As the shades begin to gather around us, our primeval instincts are aroused, and we steal forth from our lairs, like the inhabitants of the jungle, in search of those silent and brooding thoughts which are the natural prey of the intellect.

Richter says that "the earth is every day overspread with the veil of night for the same reason as the cages of birds are darkened, viz., that we may the more readily apprehend the higher harmonies of thought in the hush and quiet of darkness. Thoughts which day turns into smoke and mist stand about us in the night as light and flames; even as the column which fluctu-

ates above the crater of Vesuvius, in the daytime appears a pillar of cloud, but by night a pillar of fire."

There are nights in this climate of such serene and majestic beauty, so medicinal and fertilizing to the spirit, that methinks a sensitive nature would not devote them to oblivion, and perhaps there is no man but would be better and wiser for spending them out-of-doors, though he should sleep all the next day to pay for it, — should sleep an Endymion sleep, as the ancients expressed it, — nights which warrant the Grecian epithet ambrosial, when, as in the land of Beulah, the atmosphere is charged with dewy fragrance, and with music, and we take our repose and have our dreams awake, — when the moon, not secondary to the sun, —

"gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and sheds a softer day.
Now through the passing cloud she seems to stoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides sublime."

Diana still hunts in the New England sky.

"In Heaven queen she is among the spheres.
She, mistress-like, makes all things to be pure.
Eternity in her oft change she bears;
She Beauty is; by her the fair endure.

"Time wears her not; she doth his chariot guide;
Mortality below her orb is placed;
By her the virtues of the stars down slide;
By her is Virtue's perfect image cast."

The Hindoos compare the moon to a saintly being who has reached the last stage of bodily existence.

Great restorer of antiquity, great enchanter! In a mild night when the harvest or hunter's moon shines

unobstructedly, the houses in our village, whatever architect they may have had by day, acknowledge only a master. The village street is then as wild as the forest. New and old things are confounded. I know not whether I am sitting on the ruins of a wall, or on the material which is to compose a new one. Nature is an instructed and impartial teacher, spreading no crude opinions, and flattering none; she will be neither radical nor conservative. Consider the moonlight, so civil, yet so savage!

The light is more proportionate to our knowledge than that of day. It is no more dusky in ordinary nights than our mind's habitual atmosphere, and the moonlight is as bright as our most illuminated moments are.

"In such a night let me abroad remain
Till morning breaks, and all 's confused again."

Of what significance the light of day, if it is not the reflection of an inward dawn? — to what purpose is the veil of night withdrawn, if the morning reveals nothing to the soul? It is merely garish and glaring.

When Ossian, in his address to the sun, exclaims,—

"Where has darkness its dwelling?
Where is the cavernous home of the stars,
When thou quickly followest their steps,
Pursuing them like a hunter in the sky, —
Thou climbing the lofty hills,
They descending on barren mountains?"

who does not in his thought accompany the stars to their "cavernous home," "descending" with them "on barren mountains"?

Nevertheless, even by night the sky is blue and not black, for we see through the shadow of the earth into the distant atmosphere of day, where the sunbeams are reveling.

TRANSLATIONS

THE PROMETHEUS BOUND OF ÆSCHYLUS

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

KRATOS *and* BIA (Strength and Force).

HEPHAISTUS (Vulcan).

PROMETHEUS.

CHORUS OF OCEAN NYMPHS.

OCEANUS.

IO, *Daughter of Inachus.*

HERMES.

KRATOS *and* BIA, HEPHAISTUS, PROMETHEUS.

Kr. We are come to the far-bounding plain of earth,
To the Scythian way, to the unapproached solitude.
Hephaistus, orders must have thy attention,
Which the Father has enjoined on thee, this bold one
To the high-hanging rocks to bind
In indissoluble fetters of adamantine bonds.
For thy flower, the splendor of fire useful in all arts,
Stealing, he bestowed on mortals; and for such
A crime 't is fit he should give satisfaction to the gods;
That he may learn the tyranny of Zeus
To love, and cease from his man-loving ways.

Heph. Kratos and Bia, your charge from Zeus
Already has its end, and nothing further in the way;
But I cannot endure to bind
A kindred god by force to a bleak precipice, —
Yet absolutely there's necessity that I have courage for
these things;
For it is hard the Father's words to banish.

High-plotting son of the right-counseling Themis,
Unwilling thee unwilling in brazen fetters hard to be
loosed

I am about to nail to this inhuman hill,
Where neither voice [you 'll hear], nor form of any
mortal

See, but, scorched by the sun's clear flame,
Will change your color's bloom; and to you glad
The various-robed night will conceal the light,
And sun disperse the morning frost again;
And always the burden of the present ill
Will wear you; for he that will relieve you has not yet
been born.

Such fruits you 've reaped from your man-loving ways,
For a god, not shrinking from the wrath of gods,
You have bestowed honors on mortals more than just,
For which this pleasureless rock you 'll sentinel,
Standing erect, sleepless, not bending a knee;
And many sighs and lamentations to no purpose
Will you utter; for the mind of Zeus is hard to be
changed;

And he is wholly rugged who may newly rule.

Kr. Well, why dost thou delay and pity in vain?
Why not hate the god most hostile to gods,
Who has betrayed thy prize to mortals?

Heph. The affinity indeed is appalling, and the familiarity.

Kr. I agree, but to disobey the Father's words
How is it possible? Fear you not this more?

Heph. Ay, you are always without pity, and full of confidence.

Kr. For 't is no remedy to bewail this one;
Cherish not vainly troubles which avail naught.

Heph. O much hated handicraft!

Kr. Why hatest it? for in simple truth, for these
misfortunes

Which are present now Art's not to blame.

Heph. Yet I would 't had fallen to another's lot.

Kr. All things were done but to rule the gods,
For none is free but Zeus.

Heph. I knew it, and have naught to say against
these things.

Kr. Will you not haste, then, to put the bonds about
him,

That the Father may not observe you loitering?

Heph. Already at hand the shackles you may see.

Kr. Taking them, about his hands with firm strength
Strike with the hammer, and nail him to the rocks.

Heph. 'T is done, and not in vain this work.

Kr. Strike harder, tighten, nowhere relax,
For he is skillful to find out ways e'en from the im-
practicable.

Heph. Ay, but this arm is fixed inextricably.

Kr. And this now clasp securely, that
He may learn he is a duller schemer than is Zeus.

Heph. Except him would none justly blame me.

Kr. Now with an adamantine wedge's stubborn fang
Through the breasts nail strongly.

Heph. Alas! alas! Prometheus, I groan for thy
afflictions.

Kr. And do you hesitate? for Zeus' enemies
Do you groan? Beware lest one day you yourself will pity.

Heph. You see a spectacle hard for eyes to behold.

Kr. I see him meeting his deserts;

But round his sides put straps.

Heph. To do this is necessity, insist not much.

Kr. Surely I will insist and urge beside;

Go downward, and the thighs surround with force.

Heph. Already it is done, the work, with no long labor.

Kr. Strongly now drive the fetters, through and through,

For the critic of the works is difficult.

Heph. Like your form your tongue speaks.

Kr. Be thou softened, but for my stubbornness

Of temper and harshness reproach me not.

Heph. Let us withdraw, for he has a net about his limbs.

Kr. There now insult, and the shares of gods

Plundering on ephemerals bestow; what thee

Can mortals in these ills relieve?

Falsely thee the divinities Prometheus

Call; for you yourself need one *foreseeing*

In what manner you will escape this fortune.

PROMETHEUS, *alone.*

O divine ether, and ye swift-winged winds,

Fountains of rivers, and countless smilings

Of the ocean waves, and earth, mother of all,

And thou all-seeing orb of the sun I call.

Behold me what a god I suffer at the hands of gods.

See by what outrages

Tormented the myriad-year'd

Time I shall endure; such the new
Ruler of the blessed has contrived for me,
Unseemly bonds.

Alas! alas! the present and the coming
Woe I groan; where ever of these sufferings
Must an end appear.

But what say I? I know beforehand all,
Exactly what will be, nor to me strange
Will any evil come. The destined fate
As easily as possible it behooves to bear, knowing
Necessity's is a resistless strength.

But neither to be silent nor unsilent about this
Lot is possible for me; for a gift to mortals
Giving, I wretched have been yoked to these necessities;

Within a hollow reed by stealth I carry off fire's
Stolen source, which seemed the teacher
Of all art to mortals, and a great resource.
For such crimes penalty I pay,
Under the sky, riveted in chains.

Ah! ah! alas! alas!

What echo, what odor has flown to me obscure,
Of god, or mortal, or else mingled, —
Came it to this terminal hill

A witness of my sufferings, or wishing what?
Behold bound me an unhappy god,
The enemy of Zeus, fallen under
The ill will of all the gods, as many as
Enter into the hall of Zeus,
Through too great love of mortals.
Alas! alas! what fluttering do I hear

Of birds near? for the air rustles
With the soft rippling of wings.
Everything to me is fearful which creeps this way.

PROMETHEUS and CHORUS.

Ch. Fear nothing; for friendly this band
Of wings with swift contention
Drew to this hill, hardly
Persuading the paternal mind.
The swift-carrying breezes sent me;
For the echo of beaten steel pierced the recesses
Of the caves, and struck out from me reserved modesty;
And I rushed unsandaled in a winged chariot.

Pr. Alas! alas! alas! alas!
Offspring of the fruitful Tethys,
And of him rolling around all
The earth with sleepless stream children,
Of Father Ocean; behold, look on me;
By what bonds embraced
On this cliff's topmost rocks
I shall maintain unenvied watch.

Ch. I see, Prometheus; but to my eyes a fearful
Mist has come surcharged
With tears, looking upon thy body
Shrunk to the rocks
By these mischiefs of adamantine bonds;
Indeed, new helmsmen rule Olympus;
And with new laws Zeus strengthens himself, annulling
the old,
And the before great now makes unknown.

Pr. Would that under earth, and below Hades,
Receptacle of dead, to impassable
Tartarus he had sent me, to bonds indissoluble
Cruelly conducting, that neither god
Nor any other had rejoiced at this.
But now the sport of winds, unhappy one,
A source of pleasure to my foes, I suffer.

Ch. Who so hard-hearted
Of the gods, to whom these things are pleasant?
Who does not sympathize with thy
Misfortunes, excepting Zeus? for he in wrath always
Fixing his stubborn mind,
Afflicts the heavenly race;
Nor will he cease, until his heart is sated;
Or with some palm some one may take the power hard
to be taken.

Pr. Surely yet, though in strong
Fetters I am now maltreated,
The ruler of the blessed will have need of me,
To show the new conspiracy by which
He's robbed of sceptre and of honors,
And not at all me with persuasion's honey-tongued
Charms will he appease, nor ever,
Shrinking from his firm threats, will I
Declare this, till from cruel
Bonds he may release, and to do justice
For this outrage be willing.

Ch. You are bold; and to bitter
Woes do nothing yield,
But too freely speak.
But my mind piercing fear disturbs;

For I'm concerned about thy fortunes,
Where at length arriving you may see
An end to these afflictions. For manners
Inaccessible, and a heart hard to be dissuaded has the
son of Kronos.

Pr. I know, that — Zeus is stern and having
Justice to himself. But after all
Gentle-minded
He will one day be, when thus he's crushed,
And his stubborn wrath allaying,
Into agreement with me and friendliness
Earnest to me earnest he at length will come.

Ch. The whole account disclose and tell us plainly,
In what crime taking you Zeus
Thus disgracefully and bitterly insults;
Inform us, if you are nowise hurt by the recital.

Pr. Painful indeed it is to me to tell these things,
And a pain to be silent, and every way unfortunate.
When first the divinities began their strife,
And discord 'mong themselves arose,
Some wishing to cast Kronos from his seat,
That Zeus might reign, forsooth, others the contrary
Striving, that Zeus might never rule the gods;
Then I, the best advising, to persuade
The Titans, sons of Uranus and Chthon,
Unable was; but crafty stratagems
Despising with rude minds,
They thought without trouble to rule by force;
But to me my mother not once only, Themis,
And Gæa, of many names one form,
How the future should be accomplished had foretold,

That not by power nor by strength
Would it be necessary, but by craft the victors should
prevail.

Such I in words expounding,
They deigned not to regard at all.
The best course, therefore, of those occurring then
Appeared to be, taking my mother to me,
Of my own accord to side with Zeus glad to receive me;
And by my counsels 'Tartarus' black-pitted
Depths conceals the ancient Kronos,
With his allies. In such things by me
The tyrant of the gods having been helped,
With base rewards like these repays me;
For there is somehow in kingship
This disease, not to trust its friends.
What then you ask, for what cause
He afflicts me, this will I now explain.
As soon as on his father's throne
He sat, he straightway to the gods distributes honors,
Some to one and to another some, and arranged
The government; but of unhappy mortals account
Had none; but blotting out the race
Entire, wished to create another new.
And these things none opposed but I,
But I adventured; I rescued mortals
From going destroyed to Hades.
Therefore, indeed, with such afflictions am I bent,
To suffer grievous, and piteous to behold,
And, holding mortals up to pity, myself am not
Thought worthy to obtain it; but without pity
Am I thus corrected, a spectacle inglorious to Zeus.

Ch. Of iron heart and made of stone,
Whoe'er, Prometheus, with thy sufferings
Does not grieve; for I should not have wished to see
These things, and having seen them I am grieved at
heart.

Pr. Indeed to friends I'm piteous to behold.

Ch. Did you in no respect go beyond this?

Pr. True, mortals I made cease foreseeing fate.

Ch. Having found what remedy for this all?

Pr. Blind hopes in them I made to dwell.

Ch. A great advantage this you gave to men.

Pr. Beside these, too, I bestowed on them fire.

Ch. And have mortals flamy fire?

Pr. From which, indeed, they will learn many arts.

Ch. Upon such charges, then, does Zeus
Maltreat you, and nowhere relax from ills?

Is there no term of suffering lying before thee?

Pr. Nay, none at all, but when to him it may seem
good.

Ch. And how will it seem good? What hope? See
you not that

You have erred? But how you've erred, for me to tell
Not pleasant, and to you a pain. But these things
Let us omit, and seek you some release from sufferings.

Pr. Easy, whoever out of trouble holds his
Foot, to admonish and remind those faring
Ill. But all these things I knew;
Willing, willing I erred, I'll not deny;
Mortals assisting I myself found trouble.
Not indeed with penalties like these thought I
That I should pine on lofty rocks,

Gaining this drear unneighbored hill.
But bewail not my present woes,
But alighting, the fortunes creeping on
Hear ye, that ye may learn all to the end.
Obey me, obey, sympathize
With him now suffering. Thus indeed affliction,
Wandering round, sits now by one, then by another.

Ch. Not to unwilling ears do you urge
This, Prometheus.
And now with light foot the swift-rushing
Seat leaving, and the pure ether,
Path of birds, to this peaked
Ground I come; for thy misfortunes
I wish fully to hear.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS, and OCEANUS.

Oc. I come to the end of a long way
Traveling to thee, Prometheus,
By my will without bits directing
This wing-swift bird;
For at thy fortunes know I grieve.
And, I think, affinity thus
Impels me, but apart from birth,
There's not to whom a higher rank
I would assign than thee.
And you will know these things as true, and not in vain
To flatter with the tongue is in me. Come, therefore,
Show how it is necessary to assist you;
For never will you say, than Ocean
There's a firmer friend to thee.

Pr. Alas! what now? And you, then, of my sufferings

Come spectator? How didst thou dare, leaving
The stream which bears thy name, and rock-roofed
Caves self-built, to the iron-mother
Earth to go? To behold my fate
Hast come, and to compassionate my ills?
Behold a spectacle, this, the friend of Zeus,
Having with him stablished his tyranny,
With what afflictions by himself I'm bent.

Oc. I see, Prometheus, and would admonish
Thee the best, although of varied craft.
Know thyself, and fit thy manners
New; for new also the king among the gods.
For if thus rude and whetted words
Thou wilt hurl out, quickly may Zeus, though sitting
Far above, hear thee, so that thy present wrath
Of troubles child's play will seem to be.
But, O wretched one, dismiss the indignation which
 thou hast,
And seek deliverance from these woes.
Like an old man, perhaps, I seem to thee to say these
 things;
Such, however, are the wages
Of the too lofty speaking tongue, Prometheus;
But thou art not yet humble, nor dost yield to ills,
And beside the present wish to receive others still.
But thou wouldst not, with my counsel,
Against the pricks extend your limbs, seeing that
A stern monarch irresponsible reigns.
And now I go, and will endeavor,
If I can, to release thee from these sufferings.
But be thou quiet, nor too rudely speak.

Know'st thou not well, with thy superior wisdom, that
On a vain tongue punishment is inflicted?

Pr. I congratulate thee that thou art without blame,
Having shared and dared all with me;
And now leave off, and let it not concern thee.
For altogether thou wilt not persuade him, for he's not
easily persuaded,

But take heed yourself lest you be injured by the way.

Oc. Far better thou art to advise those near
Than thyself; by deed and not by word I judge.
But me hastening by no means mayest thou detain,
For I boast, I boast, this favor will Zeus
Grant me, from these sufferings to release thee.

Pr. So far I praise thee, and will never cease;
For zeal you nothing lack. But
Strive not; for in vain, naught helping
Me, thou'lt strive, if aught to strive you wish.
But be thou quiet, holding thyself aloof,
For I would not, though I'm unfortunate, that on this
account
Evils should come to many.

Oc. Surely not, for me too the fortunes of thy brother
Atlas grieve, who towards the evening-places
Stands, the pillar of heaven and earth
Upon his shoulders bearing, a load not easy to be borne.
And the earth-born inhabitant of the Cilician
Caves seeing, I pitied, the savage monster
With a hundred heads, by force o'ercome,
Typhon impetuous, who stood 'gainst all the gods,
With frightful jaws hissing out slaughter;
And from his eyes flashed a Gorgonian light,

Utterly to destroy by force the sovereignty of Zeus;
But there came to him Zeus' sleepless bolt,
Descending thunder, breathing flame,
Which struck him out from lofty
Boastings. For, struck to his very heart,
His strength was scorched and thundered out.
And now a useless and extended carcass
Lies he near a narrow passage of the sea,
Pressed down under the roots of Ætna.
And on the topmost summit seated, Hephaistus
Hammers the ignited mass, whence will burst out at
length

Rivers of fire, devouring with wild jaws
Fair-fruited Sicily's smooth fields;
Such rage will Typhon make boil over
With hot discharges of insatiable fire-breathing tempest,
Though by the bolt of Zeus burnt to a coal.

Pr. Thou art not inexperienced, nor dost want
My counsel; secure thyself as thou know'st how;
And I against the present fortune will bear up,
Until the thought of Zeus may cease from wrath.

Oc. Know'st thou not this, Prometheus, that
Words are healers of distempered wrath?

Pr. If any seasonably soothe the heart,
And swelling passion check not rudely.

Oc. In the consulting and the daring
What harm seest thou existing? Teach me.

Pr. Trouble superfluous, and light-minded folly.

Oc. Be this my ail then, since it is
Most profitable, being wise, not to seem wise.

Pr. This will seem to be my error.

Oc. Plainly homeward thy words remand me.

Pr. Aye, let not grief for me into hostility cast thee.

Oc. To the new occupant of the all-powerful seats?

Pr. Beware lest ever his heart be angered.

Oc. Thy fate, Prometheus, is my teacher.

Pr. Go thou, depart; preserve the present mind.

Oc. To me rushing this word you utter.

For the smooth path of the air sweeps with his wings
The four-legged bird; and gladly would
In the stalls at home bend a knee.

PROMETHEUS *and* CHORUS.

Ch. I mourn for thee thy ruinous
Fate, Prometheus,
And tear-distilling from my tender
Eyes a stream has wet
My cheeks with flowing springs;
For these, unenvied, Zeus
By his own laws enforcing,
Haughty above the gods
That were displays his sceptre.
And every region now
With groans resounds,
Mourning the illustrious
And ancient honor
Of thee and of thy kindred;
As many mortals as the habitable seat
Of sacred Asia pasture,
With thy lamentable
Woes have sympathy;
And of the Colchian land, virgin

Inhabitants, in fight undaunted,
And Scythia's multitude, who the last
Place of earth, about
Mæotis lake possess,
And Arabia's martial flower,
And who the high-hung citadels
Of Caucasus inhabit near,
A hostile army, raging
With sharp-prowed spears.
Only one other god before, in sufferings
Subdued by injuries
Of adamantine bonds, I've seen, Titanian
Atlas, who always with superior strength
The huge and heavenly globe
On his back bears;
And with a roar the sea waves
Dashing, groans the deep,
And the dark depth of Hades murmurs underneath
The earth, and fountains of pure-running rivers
Heave a pitying sigh.

Pr. Think not, indeed, through weakness or through
pride
That I am silent; for with the consciousness I gnaw my
heart,
Seeing myself thus basely used.
And yet to these new gods their shares
Who else than I wholly distributed?
But of these things I am silent; for I should tell you
What you know; the sufferings of mortals too
You've heard, how I made intelligent
And possessed of sense them ignorant before.

But I will speak, not bearing any grudge to men,
But showing in what I gave the good intention;
At first, indeed, seeing they saw in vain,
And hearing heard not; but like the forms
Of dreams, for that long time, rashly confounded
All, nor brick-woven dwellings
Knew they, placed in the sun, nor woodwork;
But digging down they dwelt, like puny
Ants, in sunless nooks of caves.
And there was naught to them, neither of winter sign,
Nor of flower-giving spring, nor fruitful
Summer, that was sure; but without knowledge
Did they all, till I taught them the risings
Of the stars, and goings down, hard to determine.
And numbers, chief of inventions,
I found out for them, and the assemblages of letters,
And memory, Muse-mother, doer of all things;
And first I joined in pairs wild animals
Obedient to the yoke; and that they might be
Alternate workers with the bodies of men
In the severest toils, I harnessed the rein-loving horses
To the car, the ornament of over-wealthy luxury.
And none else than I invented the sea-wandering
Flaxen-winged vehicles of sailors.
Such inventions I wretched having found out
For men, myself have not the ingenuity by which
From the now present ill I may escape.

Ch. You suffer unseemly ill; deranged in mind
You err; and as some bad physician, falling
Sick you are dejected, and cannot find
By what remedies you may be healed.

Pr. Hearing the rest from me more will you wonder
What arts and what expedients I planned.
That which was greatest, if any might fall sick,
There was alleviation none, neither to eat,
Nor to anoint, nor drink, but for the want
Of medicines they were reduced to skeletons, till to
them

I showed the mingling of mild remedies,
By which all ails they drive away.
And many modes of prophecy I settled,
And distinguished first of dreams what a real
Vision is required to be, and omens hard to be deter-
mined

I made known to them; and tokens by the way,
And flight of crooked-taloned birds I accurately
Defined, which lucky are,
And unlucky, and what mode of life
Have each, and to one another what
Hostilities, attachments, and assemblings;
The entrails' smoothness, and what color having
They would be to the divinities acceptable;
Of the gall and liver the various symmetry,
And the limbs concealed in fat; and the long
Flank burning, to an art hard to be guessed
I showed the way to mortals; and flammeous signs
Explained, before obscure.
Such indeed these; and under ground
Concealed the helps to men;
Brass, iron, silver, gold, who
Would affirm that he discovered before me?
None, I well know, not wishing in vain to boast.

But learn all in one word,

All arts to mortals from Prometheus.

Ch. Assist not mortals now unseasonably,
And neglect yourself unfortunate; for I
Am of good hope that, from these bonds
Released, you will yet have no less power than Zeus.

Pr. Never thus has Fate the Accomplisher
Decreed to fulfill these things, but by a myriad ills
And woes subdued, thus bonds I flee;
For art's far weaker than necessity.

Ch. Who, then, is helmsman of necessity?

Pr. The Fates three-formed, and the remembering
Furies.

Ch. Than these, then, is Zeus weaker?

Pr. Ay, he could not escape what has been fated.

Ch. But what to Zeus is fated, except always to rule?

Pr. This thou wilt not learn; seek not to know.

Ch. Surely some awful thing it is which you withhold.

Pr. Remember other words, for this by no means
Is it time to tell, but to be concealed
As much as possible; for keeping this do I
Escape unseemly bonds and woes.

Ch. Never may the all-ruling
Zeus put into my mind
Force antagonist to him.
Nor let me cease drawing near
The gods with holy sacrifices
Of slain oxen, by Father Ocean's
Ceaseless passage,
Nor offend with words,
But in me this remain

And ne'er be melted out.
'T is something sweet with bold
Hopes the long life to
Extend, in bright
Cheerfulness the cherishing spirit.
But I shudder, thee beholding
By a myriad sufferings tormented. . . .
For, not fearing Zeus,
In thy private mind thou dost regard
Mortals too much, Prometheus.
Come, though a thankless
Favor, friend, say where is any strength,
From ephemerals any help? Saw you not
The powerless inefficiency,
Dream-like, in which the blind . . .
Race of mortals are entangled?
Never counsels of mortals
May transgress the harmony of Zeus.
I learned these things looking on
Thy destructive fate, Prometheus.
For different to me did this strain come,
And that which round thy baths
And couch I hymned,
With the design of marriage, when my father's child
With bridal gifts persuading, thou didst lead
Hesione the partner of thy bed.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS, *and* Io.

Io. What earth, what race, what being shall I say
is this
I see in bridles of rock

Exposed? By what crime's
Penalty dost thou perish? Show, to what part
Of earth I miserable have wandered.
Ah! ah! alas! alas!
Again some fly doth sting me wretched,
Image of earth-born Argus, cover it, earth;
I fear the myriad-eyed herdsman beholding;
For he goes having a treacherous eye,
Whom not e'en dead the earth conceals.
But me, wretched from the Infernals passing,
He pursues, and drives fasting along the seaside
Sand, while low resounds a wax-compacted reed,
Uttering sleep-giving law; alas! alas! O gods!
Where, gods! where lead me far-wandering courses?
In what sin, O son of Kronos,
In what sin ever having taken,
To these afflictions hast thou yoked me? alas! alas!
With fly-driven fear a wretched
Frenzied one dost thus afflict?
With fire burn, or with earth cover, or
To sea monsters give for food, nor
Envy me my prayers, king.
Enough much-wandered wanderings
Have exercised me, nor can I learn where
I shall escape from sufferings.

Ch. Hear'st thou the address of the cow-horned
virgin?

Pr. And how not hear the fly-whirled virgin,
Daughter of Inachus, who Zeus' heart warmed
With love, and now the courses over long,
By Here hated, forcedly performs?

Io. Whence utterest thou my father's name?
Tell me, miserable, who thou art,
That to me, O suffering one, me born to suffer,
Thus true things dost address?
The god-sent ail thou'st named,
Which wastes me stinging
With maddening goads, alas! alas!
With foodless and unseemly leaps
Rushing headlong, I came,
By wrathful plots subdued.
Who of the wretched, who, alas! alas! suffers like me?
But to me clearly show
What me awaits to suffer,
What not necessary; what remedy of ill,
Teach, if indeed thou know'st; speak out,
Tell the ill-wandering virgin.

Pr. I'll clearly tell thee all you wish to learn.
Not weaving in enigmas, but in simple speech,
As it is just to open the mouth to friends.
Thou seest the giver of fire to men, Prometheus.

Io. O thou who didst appear a common help to
mortals,
Wretched Prometheus, to atone for what do you endure
this?

Pr. I have scarce ceased my sufferings lamenting.

Io. Would you not grant this favor to me?

Pr. Say what you ask; for you'd learn all from me.

Io. Say who has bound thee to the cliff.

Pr. The will, indeed, of Zeus, Hephaistus' hand.

Io. And penalty for what crimes dost thou pay?

Pr. Thus much only can I show thee.

Io. But beside this, declare what time will be
To me unfortunate the limit of my wandering.

Pr. Not to learn is better for thee than to learn these
things.

Io. Conceal not from me what I am to suffer.

Pr. Indeed, I grudge thee not this favor.

Io. Why, then, dost thou delay to tell the whole?

Pr. There's no unwillingness, but I hesitate to vex
thy mind.

Io. Care not for me more than is pleasant to me.

Pr. Since you are earnest, it behooves to speak; hear
then.

Ch. Not yet, indeed; but a share of pleasure also
give to me.

First we'll learn the malady of this one,
Herself relating her destructive fortunes,
And the remainder of her trials let her learn from thee.

Pr. 'T is thy part, *Io*, to do these a favor,
As well for every other reason, and as they are sisters of
thy father.

Since to weep and to lament misfortunes,
There where one will get a tear
From those attending, is worthy the delay.

Io. I know not that I need distrust you,
But in plain speech you shall learn
All that you ask for; and yet e'en telling I lament
The god-sent tempest, and dissolution
Of my form — whence to me miserable it came.
For always visions in the night, moving about
My virgin chambers, enticed me
With smooth words: "O greatly happy virgin,

Why be a virgin long? is permitted to obtain
The greatest marriage. For Zeus with love's dart
Has been warmed by thee, and wishes to unite
In love; but do thou, O child, spurn not the couch
Of Zeus, but go out to Lerna's deep
Morass, and stables of thy father's herds,
That the divine eye may cease from desire."'
With such dreams every night
Was I unfortunate, distressed, till I dared tell
My father of the night-wandering visions.
And he to Pytho and Dodona frequent
Prophets sent, that he might learn what it was necessary
He should say or do, to do agreeably to the gods.
And they came bringing ambiguous
Oracles, darkly and indistinctly uttered.
But finally a plain report came to Inachus,
Clearly enjoining him and telling
Out of my home and country to expel me,
Discharged to wander to the earth's last bounds;
And if he was not willing, from Zeus would come
A fiery thunderbolt, which would annihilate all his race.
Induced by such predictions of the Loxian,
Against his will he drove me out,
And shut me from the houses; but Zeus' rein
Compelled him by force to do these things.
Immediately my form and mind were
Changed, and horned, as you behold, stung
By a sharp-mouthed fly, with frantic leaping
Rushed I to Cenchrea's palatable stream,
And Lerna's source; but a herdsman born-of-earth
Of violent temper, Argus, accompanied, with numerous

Eyes my steps observing.
But unexpectedly a sudden fate
Robbed him of life; and I, fly-stung,
By lash divine am driven from land to land.
You hear what has been done; and if you have to say
aught,

What's left of labors, speak; nor pitying me
Comfort with false words; for an ill
The worst of all, I say, are made-up words.

Ch. Ah! ah! enough, alas!

Ne'er, ne'er did I presume such cruel words
Would reach my ears, nor thus unsightly
And intolerable hurts, sufferings, fears with a two-edged
Goad would chill my soul;
Alas! alas! fate! fate!

I shudder, seeing the state of Io.

Pr. Beforehand sigh'st thou, and art full of fears,
Hold till the rest also thou learn'st.

Ch. Tell, teach; for to the sick 't is sweet
To know the remaining pain beforehand clearly.

Pr. Your former wish ye got from me
With ease; for first ye asked to learn from her
Relating her own trials;
The rest now hear, what sufferings 't is necessary
This young woman should endure from Here.
But do thou, offspring of Inachus, my words
Cast in thy mind, that thou may'st learn the boundaries
of the way.

First, indeed, hence towards the rising of the sun
Turning thyself, travel uncultivated lands,
And to the Scythian nomads thou wilt come, who woven
roofs

On high inhabit, on well-wheeled carts,
With far-casting bows equipped;
Whom go not near, but to the sea-resounding cliffs
Bending thy feet, pass from the region.
On the left hand the iron-working
Chalybes inhabit, whom thou must needs beware,
For they are rude and inaccessible to strangers.
And thou wilt come to the Hybristes river, not ill named,
Which pass not, for not easy is 't to pass,
Before you get to Caucasus itself, highest
Of mountains, where the stream spurts out its tide
From the very temples; and passing over
The star-neighbored summits, 't is necessary to go
The southern way, where thou wilt come to the man-
hating
Army of the Amazons, who Themiscyra one day
Will inhabit, by the Thermedon, where's
Salmydessia, rough jaw of the sea,
Inhospitable to sailors, stepmother of ships;
They will conduct thee on thy way, and very cheerfully.
And to the Cimmerian isthmus thou wilt come,
Just on the narrow portals of a lake, which leaving
It behooves thee with stout heart to pass the Mæotic
straits;
And there will be to mortals ever a great fame
Of thy passage, and Bosphorus from thy name
'T will be called. And leaving Europe's plain
The continent of Asia thou wilt reach. — Seemeth to
thee, forsooth,
The tyrant of the gods in everything to be
Thus violent? For he a god, with this mortal

Wishing to unite, drove her to these wanderings.
A bitter wooer didst thou find, O virgin,
For thy marriage. For the words you now have heard
Think not yet to be the prelude.

Io. Ah! me! me! alas! alas!

Pr. Again dost shriek and heave a sigh? What
Wilt thou do when the remaining ills thou learn'st?

Ch. And hast thou any further suffering to tell her?

Pr. Ay, a tempestuous sea of baleful woe.

Io. What profit, then, for me to live, and not in
haste

To cast myself from this rough rock,
That rushing down upon the plain I may be released
From every trouble? For better once for all to die,
Than all my days to suffer evilly.

Pr. Unhappily my trials would'st thou hear,
To whom to die has not been fated;
For this would be release from sufferings;
But now there is no end of ills lying
Before me, until Zeus falls from sovereignty.

Io. And is Zeus ever to fall from power?

Pr. Thou would'st be pleased, I think, to see this
accident.

Io. How should I not, who suffer ill from Zeus?

Pr. That these things then are so, be thou assured.

Io. By what one will the tyrant's power be robbed?

Pr. Himself, by his own senseless counsels.

Io. In what way show, if there's no harm.

Pr. He will make such a marriage as one day he'll
repent.

Io. Of god or mortal? If to be spoken, tell.

Pr. What matters which? For these things are not to be told.

Io. By a wife will he be driven from the throne?

Pr. Ay, she will bring forth a son superior to his father.

Io. Is there no refuge for him from this fate?

Pr. None, surely, till I may be released from bonds.

Io. Who, then, is to release thee, Zeus unwilling?

Pr. He must be some one of thy descendants.

Io. How sayest thou? that my child will deliver thee from ills?

Pr. Third of thy race after ten other births.

Io. This oracle is not yet easy to be guessed.

Pr. But do not seek to understand thy sufferings.

Io. First proffering gain to me, do not then withhold it.

Pr. I'll grant thee one of two relations.

Io. What two propose, and give to me my choice.

Pr. I give; choose whether thy remaining troubles I shall tell thee clearly, or him that will release me.

Ch. Consent to do her the one favor,
Me the other, nor deem us undeserving of thy words;
To her indeed tell what remains of wandering,
And to me, who will release; for I desire this.

Pr. Since ye are earnest, I will not resist
To tell the whole, as much as ye ask for.
To thee first, Io, vexatious wandering I will tell,
Which engrave on the remembering tablets of the mind.
When thou hast passed the flood boundary of continents,
Towards the flaming orient sun-traveled . . .

Passing through the tumult of the sea, until you reach

The Gorgonian plains of Cisthene, where

The Phorcides dwell, old virgins,

Three, swan-shaped, having a common eye,

One-toothed, whom neither the sun looks on

With his beams, nor nightly moon ever.

And near, their winged sisters three,

Dragon-scaled Gorgons, odious to men,

Whom no mortal beholding will have breath;

Such danger do I tell thee.

But hear another odious sight;

Beware the gryphons, sharp-mouthed

Dogs of Zeus, which bark not, and the one-eyed Ari-
maspian

Host, going on horseback, who dwell about

The golden-flowing flood of Pluto's channel;

These go not near. But to a distant land

Thou'lt come, a dusky race, who near the fountains

Of the sun inhabit, where is the Æthiopian river.

Creep down the banks of this, until thou com'st

To a descent, where from Byblinian mounts

The Nile sends down its sacred palatable stream.

This will conduct thee to the triangled land

Nilean, where, Io, 't is decreed

Thou and thy progeny shall form the distant colony.

If aught of this is unintelligible to thee, and hard to be
found out,

Repeat thy questions, and learn clearly;

For more leisure than I want is granted me.

Ch. If to her aught remaining or omitted
Thou hast to tell of her pernicious wandering,

Speak; but if thou hast said all, give us
The favor which we ask, for surely thou remember'st.

Pr. The whole term of her traveling has she heard.
But that she may know that not in vain she hears me,
I'll tell what before coming hither she endured,
Giving this as proof of my relations.
The great multitude of words I will omit,
And proceed unto the very limit of thy wanderings.
When, then, you came to the Molossian ground,
And near the high-ridged Dodona, where
Oracle and seat is of Thesprotian Zeus,
And prodigy incredible, the speaking oaks,
By whom you clearly, and naught enigmatically,
Were called the illustrious wife of Zeus
About to be, if aught of these things soothes thee;
Thence, driven by the fly, you came
The seaside way to the great gulf of Rhea,
From which by courses retrograde you are now tempest-
tossed.

But for time to come the sea gulf,
Clearly know, will be called Ionian,
Memorial of thy passage to all mortals.
Proofs to thee are these of my intelligence,
That it sees somewhat more than the apparent.
But the rest to you and her in common I will tell,
Having come upon the very track of former words.
There is a city Canopus, last of the land,
By Nile's very mouth and bank;
There at length Zeus makes thee sane,
Stroking with gentle hand, and touching only.
And, named from Zeus' begetting,

Thou wilt bear dark Epaphus, who will reap
As much land as broad-flowing Nile doth water;
And fifth from him, a band of fifty children
Again to Argos shall unwilling come,
Of female sex, avoiding kindred marriage
Of their cousins; but they, with minds inflamed,
Hawks by doves not far left behind,
Will come pursuing marriages
Not to be pursued, but heaven will take vengeance on
their bodies;

For them Pelasgia shall receive by Mars
Subdued with woman's hand with night-watching
boldness.

For each wife shall take her husband's life,
Staining a two-edged dagger in his throat.
Such 'gainst my foes may Cypris come. —
But one of the daughters shall love soften
Not to slay her bedfellow, but she will waver
In her mind; and one of two things will prefer,
To hear herself called timid, rather than stained with
blood;

She shall in Argos bear a royal race. —
Of a long speech is need this clearly to discuss.
From this seed, however, shall be born a brave,
Famed for his bow, who will release me
From these sufferings. Such oracle my ancient
Mother told me, Titanian Themis;
But how and by what means, this needs long speech
To tell, and nothing, learning, wilt thou gain.

Io. Ah me! ah wretched me!

Spasms again and brain-struck

Madness burn me within, and a fly's dart
Stings me, — not wrought by fire.
My heart with fear knocks at my breast,
And my eyes whirl round and round,
And from my course I'm borne by madness'
Furious breath, unable to control my tongue;
While confused words dash idly
'Gainst the waves of horrid woe.

Ch. Wise, wise indeed was he,
Who first in mind
This weighed, and with the tongue expressed,
To marry according to one's degree is best by far;
Nor, being a laborer with the hands,
To woo those who are by wealth corrupted,
Nor, those by birth made great.
Never, never me
Fates . . .
May you behold the sharer of Zeus' couch.
Nor may I be brought near to any husband among those
from heaven,
For I fear, seeing the virginhood of Io,
Not content with man, through marriage vexed
With these distressful wanderings by Here.
But for myself, since an equal marriage is without fear,
I am not concerned lest the love of the 'almighty
Gods cast its inevitable eye on me.
Without war, indeed, this war, producing
Troubles; nor do I know what would become of me;
For I see not how I should escape the subtlety of Zeus.

Pr. Surely shall Zeus, though haughty now,
Yet be humble, such marriage

He prepares to make, which from sovereignty
And the throne will cast him down obscure; and Father
Kronos'

Curse will then be all fulfilled,
Which falling from the ancient seats he imprecated.
And refuge from such ills none of the gods
But I can show him clearly.
I know these things, and in what manner. Now, therefore,
Being bold, let him sit trusting to lofty
Sounds, and brandishing with both hands his fire-breath-
ing weapon,
For naught will these avail him, not
To fall disgracefully intolerable falls;
Such wrestler does he now prepare,
Himself against himself, a prodigy most hard to be with-
stood;

Who, indeed, will invent a better flame than lightning,
And a loud sound surpassing thunder;
And shiver the trident, Neptune's weapon,
The marine earth-shaking ail.
Stumbling upon this ill he'll learn
How different to govern and to serve.

Ch. Ay, as you hope you vent this against Zeus.

Pr. What will be done, and also what I hope, I say.

Ch. And are we to expect that any will rule Zeus?

Pr. Even than these more grievous ills he'll have.

Ch. How fear'st thou not, hurling such words?

Pr. What should I fear, to whom to die has not been
fated?

Ch. But suffering more grievous still than this he may
inflict.

Pr. Then let him do it; all is expected by me.

Ch. Those reverencing Adrastia are wise.

Pr. Revere, pray, flatter each successive ruler.
Me less than nothing Zeus concerns.

Let him do, let him prevail this short time

As he will, for long he will not rule the gods, —

But I see here, indeed, Zeus' runner,

The new tryant's drudge;

Doubtless he brings some new message.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS, and HERMES.

Her. To thee, the sophist, the bitterly bitter,

The sinner against gods, the giver of honors

To ephemerals, the thief of fire, I speak;

The Father commands thee to tell the marriage

Which you boast, by which he falls from power;

And that, too, not enigmatically,

But each particular declare; nor cause me

Double journeys, Prometheus; for thou see'st that
Zeus is not appeased by such.

Pr. Solemn-mouthed and full of wisdom

Is thy speech, as of the servant of the gods.

Ye newly rule, and think forsooth

To dwell in griefless citadels; have I not seen

Two tyrants fallen from these?

And third I shall behold him ruling now,

Basest and speediest. Do I seem to thee

To fear and shrink from the new gods?

Nay, much and wholly I fall short of this.

The way thou cam'st go through the dust again;

For thou wilt learn naught which thou ask'st of me.

Her. Ay, by such insolence before
You brought yourself into these woes.

Pr. Plainly know, I would not change
My ill fortune for thy servitude,
For better, I think, to serve this rock
Than be the faithful messenger of Father Zeus.
Thus to insult the insulting it is fit.

Her. Thou seem'st to enjoy thy present state.

Pr. I enjoy? Enjoying thus my enemies
Would I see; and thee 'mong them I count.

Her. Dost thou blame me for aught of thy misfortunes?

Pr. In plain words, all gods I hate,
As many as well treated wrong me unjustly.

Her. I hear thee raving, no slight ail.

Pr. Ay, I should ail, if ail one's foes to hate.

Her. If prosperous, thou couldst not be borne.

Pr. Ah me!

Her. This word Zeus does not know.

Pr. But time growing old teaches all things.

Her. And still thou know'st not yet how to be prudent.

Pr. For I should not converse with thee a servant.

Her. Thou seem'st to say naught which the Father
wishes.

Pr. And yet his debtor I'd requite the favor.

Her. Thou mock'st me verily as if I were a child.

Pr. And art thou not a child, and simpler still than
this,

If thou expectest to learn aught from me?
There is not outrage nor expedient, by which
Zeus will induce me to declare these things,

Before he loose these grievous bonds.
Let there be hurled, then, flaming fire,
And the white-winged snows, and thunders
Of the earth, let him confound and mingle all.
For none of these will bend me till I tell
By whom 't is necessary he should fall from sovereignty.

Her. Consider now if these things seem helpful.

Pr. Long since these were considered and resolved.

Her. Venture, O vain one, venture, at length,
In view of present sufferings to be wise.

Pr. In vain you vex me, as a wave, exhorting.
Ne'er let it come into thy mind that I, fearing
Zeus' anger, shall become woman-minded,
And beg him, greatly hated,
With womanish upturnings of the hands,
To loose me from these bonds. I am far from it.

Her. Though saying much I seem in vain to speak;
For thou art nothing softened nor appeased
By prayers; but champing at the bit like a new-yoked
Colt, thou strugglest and contend'st against the reins.
But thou art violent with feeble wisdom.
For stubbornness to him who is not wise,
Itself alone, is less than nothing strong.
But consider, if thou art not persuaded by my words,
What storm and triple surge of ills
Will come upon thee, not to be avoided; for first this
rugged

Cliff with thunder and lightning flame
The Father'll rend, and hide
Thy body, and a strong arm will bury thee.
When thou hast spent a long length of time,

Thou wilt come back to light; and Zeus'
Winged dog, a bloodthirsty eagle, ravenously
Shall tear the great rag of thy body,
Creeping an uninvited guest all day,
And banquet on thy liver black by eating.
Of such suffering expect not any end,
Before some god appear
Succeeding to thy labors, and wish to go to rayless
Hades, and the dark depths of Tartarus.
Therefore deliberate; since this is not made
Boasting, but in earnest spoken;
For to speak falsely does not know the mouth
Of Zeus, but every word he does. So
Look about thee, and consider, nor ever think
Obstinacy better than prudence.

Ch. To us indeed Hermes appears to say not unseasonable things,

For he directs thee, leaving off
Self-will, to seek prudent counsel.
Obey; for it is base to err, for a wise man.

Pr. To me foreknowing these messages
He has uttered, but for a foe to suffer ill
From foes is naught unseemly.
Therefore 'gainst me let there be hurled
Fire's double-pointed curl, and air
Be provoked with thunder, and a tumult
Of wild winds; and earth from its foundations
Let a wind rock, and its very roots,
And with a rough surge mingle
The sea waves with the passages
Of the heavenly stars, and to black

Tartarus let him quite cast down my
Body, by necessity's strong eddies.
Yet after all he will not kill me.

Her. Such words and counsels you may hear
From the brain-struck.
For what lacks he of being mad?
And if prosperous, what does he cease from madness?
Do you, therefore, who sympathize
With this one's suffering,
From these places quick withdraw somewhere,
Lest the harsh bellowing thunder
Stupefy your minds.

Ch. Say something else, and exhort me
To some purpose; for surely
Thou hast intolerably abused this word.
How direct me to perform a baseness?
I wish to suffer with him whate'er is necessary,
For I have learned to hate betrayers;
Nor is the pest
Which I abominate more than this.

Her. Remember, then, what I foretell;
Nor by calamity pursued
Blame fortune, nor e'er say
That Zeus into unforeseen
Ill has cast you; surely not, but yourselves
You yourselves; for knowing,
And not suddenly nor clandestinely,
You'll be entangled through your folly
In an impassable net of woe.

Pr. Surely indeed, and no more in word,
Earth is shaken;

And a hoarse sound of thunder
Bellows near; and wreaths of lightning
Flash out fiercely blazing, and whirlwinds dust
Whirl up; and leap the blasts
Of all winds, 'gainst one another
Blowing in opposite array;
And air with sea is mingled;
Such impulse against me from Zeus,
Producing fear, doth plainly come.
O revered Mother, O Ether
Revolving common light to all,
You see me, how unjust things I endure!

TRANSLATIONS FROM PINDAR

ELYSIUM

OLYMPIA II, 109-150

EQUALLY by night always,
And by day, having the sun, the good
Lead a life without labor, not disturbing the earth
With violent hands, nor the sea water,
For a scanty living; but honored
By the gods, who take pleasure in fidelity to oaths,
They spend a tearless existence;
While the others suffer unsightly pain.
But as many as endured threefold
Probation, keeping the mind from all
Injustice, going the way of Zeus to Kronos' tower,
Where the ocean breezes blow around
The island of the blessed; and flowers of gold shine,

Some on the land from dazzling trees,
And the water nourishes others;
With garlands of these they crown their hands and hair,
According to the just decrees of Rhadamanthus,
Whom Father Kronos, the husband of Rhea,
Having the highest throne of all, has ready by himself as
his assistant judge.

Peleus and Kadmus are regarded among these;
And his mother brought Achilles, when she had
Persuaded the heart of Zeus with prayers,
Who overthrew Hector, Troy's
Unconquered, unshaken column, and gave Cygnus
To death, and Morning's Æthiop son.

OLYMPIA V, 34-39

Always around virtues labor and expense strive toward a
work
Covered with danger; but those succeeding seem to be
wise even to the citizens.

OLYMPIA VI, 14-17

Dangerless virtues,
Neither among men, nor in hollow ships,
Are honorable; but many remember if a fair deed is
done.

ORIGIN OF RHODES

OLYMPIA VII, 100-129

Ancient sayings of men relate,
That when Zeus and the Immortals divided earth,
Rhodes was not yet apparent in the deep sea;
But in salt depths the island was hid.

And, Helios being absent, no one claimed for him his lot;
So they left him without any region for his share,
The pure god. And Zeus was about to make a second
drawing of lots

For him warned. But he did not permit him;
For he said that within the white sea he had seen a cer-
tain land springing up from the bottom,
Capable of feeding many men, and suitable for flocks.
And straightway he commanded golden-filleted La-
chesis

To stretch forth her hands, and not contradict
The great oath of the gods, but with the son of Kronos
Assent that, to the bright air being sent by his nod,
It should hereafter be his prize. And his words were
fully performed,

Meeting with truth. The island sprang from the watery
Sea; and the genial Father of penetrating beams,
Ruler of fire-breathing horses, has it.

OLYMPIA VIII, 95, 96

A man doing fit things
Forgets Hades.

HERCULES NAMES THE HILL OF KRONOS

OLYMPIA X, 59-68

He named the Hill of Kronos, for before nameless,
While Ænomaus ruled, it was moistened with much
snow;

And at this first rite the Fates stood by,
And Time, who alone proves
Unchanging truth.

OLYMPIA AT EVENING

OLYMPIA X, 85-92

With the javelin Phrastor struck the mark;
And Eniceus cast the stone afar,
Whirling his hand, above them all,
And with applause it rushed
Through a great tumult;
And the lovely evening light
Of the fair-faced moon shone on the scene.

FAME

OLYMPIA X, 109-117

When, having done fair things, O Agesidamus,
Without the reward of song, a man may come
To Hades' rest, vainly aspiring
He obtains with toil some short delight.
But the sweet-voiced lyre
And the sweet flute bestow some favor;
For Zeus' Pierian daughters
Have wide fame.

TO ASOPICHUS OF ORCHOMENOS, ON HIS VICTORY IN
THE STADIC COURSE

OLYMPIA XIV

O ye, who inhabit for your lot the seat of the Cephisian
Streams, yielding fair steeds, renowned Graces,
Ruling bright Orchomenos,
Protectors of the ancient race of Minyæ,
Hear, when I pray.
For with you are all pleasant
And sweet things to mortals;

If wise, if fair, if noble,
Any man. For neither do the gods,
Without the august Graces,
Rule the dance,
Nor feasts; but stewards
Of all works in heaven,
Having placed their seats
By golden-bowed Pythian Apollo,
They reverence the eternal power
Of the Olympian Father.
August Aglaia and song-loving
Euphrosyne, children of the mightiest god,
Hear now, and Thalia loving song,
Beholding this band, in favorable fortune
Lightly dancing; for in Lydian
Manner meditating,
I come celebrating Asopichus,
Since Minya by thy means is victor at the Olympic games.
Now to Persephone's
Black-walled house go, Echo,
Bearing to his father the famous news;
That seeing Cleodamus thou mayest say,
That in renowned Pisa's vale
His son crowned his young hair
With plumes of illustrious contests.

TO THE LYRE

PYTHIA I, 8-11

Thou extinguishest even the spear-like bolt
Of everlasting fire. And the eagle sleeps on the sceptre
of Zeus,

Drooping his swift wings on either side,
The king of birds.

PYTHIA I, 25-28

Whatever things Zeus has not loved
Are terrified, hearing
The voice of the Pierians,
On earth and the immeasurable sea.

PYTHIA II, 159-161

A plain-spoken man brings advantage to every govern-
ment, —
To a monarchy, and when the
Impetuous crowd, and when the wise, rule a city.

As a whole, the third Pythian Ode, to Hiero, on his victory in the single-horse race, is one of the most memorable. We extract first the account of

ÆSCULAPIUS

PYTHIA III, 83-110

As many, therefore, as came suffering
From spontaneous ulcers, or wounded
In their limbs with glittering steel,
Or with the far-cast stone,
Or by the summer's heat o'ercome in body,
Or by winter, relieving he saved from
Various ills; some cherishing
With soothing strains,
Others having drunk refreshing draughts, or applying
Remedies to the limbs, others by cutting off he made erect.

But even wisdom is bound by gain,
And gold appearing in the hand persuaded even him,
 with its bright reward,
To bring a man from death
Already overtaken. But the Kronian, smiting
With both hands, quickly took away
The breath from his breasts;
And the rushing thunderbolt hurled him to death.
It is necessary for mortal minds
To seek what is reasonable from the divinities,
Knowing what is before the feet, of what destiny we are.
Do not, my soul, aspire to the life
Of the Immortals, but exhaust the practicable means.

In the conclusion of the ode, the poet reminds the victor, Hiero, that adversity alternates with prosperity in the life of man, as in the instance of

PELEUS AND CADMUS

PYTHIA III, 145-205

The Immortals distribute to men
With one good two
Evils. The foolish, therefore,
Are not able to bear these with grace,
But the wise, turning the fair outside.

But thee the lot of good fortune follows,
For surely great Destiny
Looks down upon a king ruling the people,
If on any man. But a secure life
Was not to Peleus, son of Æacus,

Nor to godlike Cadmus,
Who yet are said to have had
The greatest happiness
Of mortals, and who heard
The song of the golden-filleted Muses,
On the mountain, and in seven-gated Thebes,
When the one married fair-eyed Harmonia,
And the other Thetis, the illustrious daughter of wise-
counseling Nereus.
And the gods feasted with both;
And they saw the royal children of Kronos
On golden seats, and received
Marriage gifts; and having exchanged
Former toils for the favor of Zeus,
They made erect the heart.
But in course of time
His three daughters robbed the one
Of some of his serenity by acute
Sufferings; when Father Zeus, forsooth, came
To the lovely couch of white-armed Thyone.
And the other's child, whom only the immortal
Thetis bore in Phthia, losing
His life in war by arrows,
Being consumed by fire excited
The lamentation of the Danaans.
But if any mortal has in his
Mind the way of truth,
It is necessary to make the best
Of what befalls from the blessed.
For various are the blasts
Of high-flying winds.

The happiness of men stays not a long time,
Though fast it follows rushing on.

Humble in humble estate, lofty in lofty,
I will be; and the attending dæmon
I will always reverence in my mind,
Serving according to my means.
But if Heaven extend to me kind wealth,
I have hope to find lofty fame hereafter.
Nestor and Lycian Sarpedon —
They are the fame of men —
From resounding words which skillful artists
Sung, we know.
For virtue through renowned
Song is lasting.
But for few is it easy to obtain.

APOLLO

PYTHIA V, 87-90

He bestowed the lyre,
And he gives the muse to whom he wishes,
Bringing peaceful serenity to the breast.

MAN

PYTHIA VIII, 136

The phantom of a shadow are men.

HYPSEUS' DAUGHTER CYRENE

PYTHIA IX, 31-44

He reared the white-armed child Cyrene,
Who loved neither the alternating motion of the loom,
Nor the superintendence of feasts,

With the pleasures of companions;
But, with javelins of steel
And the sword contending,
To slay wild beasts;
Affording surely much
And tranquil peace to her father's herds;
Spending little sleep
Upon her eyelids,
As her sweet bedfellow, creeping on at dawn.

THE HEIGHT OF GLORY

PYTHIA X, 33-48

Fortunate and celebrated
By the wise is that man
Who, conquering by his hands or virtue
Of his feet, takes the highest prizes
Through daring and strength,
And living still sees his youthful son
Deservedly obtaining Pythian crowns.
The brazen heaven is not yet accessible to him.
But whatever glory we
Of mortal race may reach,
He goes beyond, even to the boundaries
Of navigation. But neither in ships, nor going on foot,
Couldst thou find the wonderful way to the contests of
the Hyperboreans.

TO ARISTOCLIDES, VICTOR AT THE NEMEAN GAMES

NEMEA III, 32-37

If, being beautiful,
And doing things like to his form,

The child of Aristophanes
Went to the height of manliness, no further
Is it easy to go over the untraveled sea,
Beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

THE YOUTH OF ACHILLES

NEMEA III, 69-90

One with native virtues
Greatly prevails; but he who
Possesses acquired talents, an obscure man,
Aspiring to various things, never with fearless
Foot advances, but tries
A myriad virtues with inefficient mind.
Yellow-haired Achilles, meanwhile, remaining in the
 house of Philyra,
Being a boy played
Great deeds; often brandishing
Iron-pointed javelins in his hands,
Swift as the winds, in fight he wrought death to savage
 lions;
And he slew boars, and brought their bodies
Palpitating to Kronian Centaurus,
As soon as six years old. And all the while
Artemis and bold Athene admired him,
Slaying stags without dogs or treacherous nets;
For he conquered them on foot.

NEMEA IV, 66--70

Whatever virtues sovereign destiny has given me,
I well know that time, creeping on,
Will fulfill what was fated.

NEMEA V, 1-8

The kindred of Pytheas, a victor in the Nemean games, had wished to procure an ode from Pindar for less than three drachmæ, asserting that they could purchase a statue for that sum. In the following lines he nobly reproves their meanness, and asserts the value of his labors, which, unlike those of the statuary, will bear the fame of the hero to the ends of the earth.

No image-maker am I, who being still make statues
Standing on the same base. But on every
Merchant-ship and in every boat, sweet song,
Go from Ægina to announce that Lampo's son,
Mighty Pytheas,
Has conquered the pancratian crown at the Nemean
games.

THE DIVINE IN MAN

NEMEA VI, 1-13

One the race of men and of gods;
And from one mother
We all breathe.
But quite different power
Divides us, so that the one is nothing,
But the brazen heaven remains always
A secure abode. Yet in some respect we are related,
Either in mighty mind or form, to the Immortals;
Although not knowing
To what resting-place,
By day or night, Fate has written that we shall run.

THE TREATMENT OF AJAX

NEMEA VIII, 44-51

In secret votes the Danaans aided Ulysses;
And Ajax, deprived of golden arms, struggled with
death.

Surely, wounds of another kind they wrought
In the warm flesh of their foes, waging war
With the man-defending spear.

THE VALUE OF FRIENDS

NEMEA VIII, 68-75

Virtue increases, being sustained by wise men and just,
As when a tree shoots up with gentle dew into the
liquid air.

There are various uses of friendly men;
But chiefest in labors; and even pleasure
Requires to place some pledge before the eyes.

DEATH OF AMPHIARAUS

NEMEA IX, 41-66

Once they led to seven-gated Thebes an army of men,
not according
To the lucky flight of birds. Nor did the Kronian,
Brandishing his lightning, impel to march
From home insane, but to abstain from the way.
But to apparent destruction
The host made haste to go, with brazen arms
And horse equipments, and on the banks
Of Ismenus, defending sweet return,
Their white-flowered bodies fattened fire.
For seven pyres devoured young-limbed

Men. But to Amphiaræus
Zeus rent the deep-bosomed earth
With his mighty thunderbolt,
And buried him with his horses,
Ere, being struck in the back
By the spear of Periclymenus, his warlike
Spirit was disgraced.
For in dæmonic fears
Flee even the sons of gods.

CASTOR AND POLLUX

NEMEA X, 153-171

Pollux, son of Zeus, shared his immortality with his brother Castor, son of Tyndarus, and while one was in heaven, the other remained in the infernal regions, and they alternately lived and died every day, or, as some say, every six months. While Castor lies mortally wounded by Idas, Pollux prays to Zeus, either to restore his brother to life, or permit him to die with him, to which the god answers, —

Nevertheless, I give thee
Thy choice of these: if, indeed, fleeing
Death and odious age,
You wish to dwell on Olympus,
With Athene and black-speared Mars,
Thou hast this lot;
But if thou thinkest to fight
For thy brother, and share
All things with him,
Half the time thou mayest breathe, being beneath the
earth,

And half in the golden halls of heaven.
The god thus having spoken, he did not
Entertain a double wish in his mind.
And he released first the eye, and then the voice,
Of brazen-mitred Castor.

TOIL

ISTHMIA I, 65-71

One reward of labors is sweet to one man, one to another, —
To the shepherd, and the plower, and the bird-catcher,
And whom the sea nourishes.
But every one is tasked to ward off
Grievous famine from the stomach.

THE VENALITY OF THE MUSE

ISTHMIA II, 9-18

Then the Muse was not
Fond of gain, nor a laboring woman;
Nor were the sweet-sounding,
Soothing strains
Of Terpsichore sold,
With silvered front.
But now she directs to observe the saying
Of the Argive, coming very near the truth,
Who cried, "Money, money, man,"
Being bereft of property and friends.

HERCULES' PRAYER CONCERNING AJAX, SON OF

TELAMON

ISTHμία VI, 62-73

"If ever, O Father Zeus, thou hast heard
 My supplication with willing mind,
 Now I beseech thee, with prophetic
 Prayer, grant a bold son from Eribœa
 To this man, my fated guest;
 Rugged in body
 As the hide of this wild beast
 Which now surrounds me, which, first of all
 My contests, I slew once in Nemea; and let his mind
 agree."
 To him thus having spoken, Heaven sent
 A great eagle, king of birds,
 And sweet joy thrilled him inwardly.

THE FREEDOM OF GREECE

First at Artemisium

The children of the Athenians laid the shining
 Foundation of freedom,
 And at Salamis and Mycale,
 And in Plataea, making it firm
 As adamant.

FROM STRABO¹

APOLLO

Having risen he went
 Over land and sea,

¹ [This and the following are fragments of Pindar found in ancient authors.]

And stood over the vast summits of mountains,
And threaded the recesses, penetrating to the founda-
tions of the groves.

FROM PLUTARCH

Heaven being willing, even on an osier thou mayest sail.
[Thus rhymed by the old translator of Plutarch:
"Were it the will of heaven, an osier bough
Were vessel safe enough the seas to plough."]

FROM SEXTUS EMPIRICUS

Honors and crowns of the tempest-footed
Horses delight one;
Others live in golden chambers;
And some even are pleased traversing securely
The swelling of the sea in a swift ship.

FROM STOBÆUS

This I will say to thee:
The lot of fair and pleasant things
It behooves to show in public to all the people;
But if any adverse calamity sent from heaven befall
Men, this it becomes to bury in darkness.

Pindar said of the physiologists, that they "plucked the unripe fruit of wisdom."

Pindar said that "hopes were the dreams of those awake."

FROM CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA

To Heaven it is possible from black
Night to make arise unspotted light,

And with cloud-blackening darkness to obscure
The pure splendor of day.

First, indeed, the Fates brought the wise-counseling
Uranian Themis, with golden horses,
By the fountains of Ocean to the awful ascent
Of Olympus, along the shining way,
To be the first spouse of Zeus the Deliverer.
And she bore the golden-filleted, fair-wristed
Hours, preservers of good things.

Equally tremble before God
And a man dear to God.

FROM ÆLIUS ARISTIDES

Pindar used such exaggerations [in praise of poetry] as to say that even the gods themselves, when at his marriage Zeus asked if they wanted anything, "asked him to make certain gods for them who should celebrate these great works and all his creation with speech and song."

POEMS

NATURE

O NATURE! I do not aspire
To be the highest in thy quire, —
To be a meteor in the sky,
Or comet that may range on high;
Only a zephyr that may blow
Among the reeds by the river low;
Give me thy most privy place
Where to run my airy race.

In some withdrawn, unpublic mead
Let me sigh upon a reed,
Or in the woods, with leafy din,
Whisper the still evening in:
Some still work give me to do, —
Only — be it near to you!

For I'd rather be thy child
And pupil, in the forest wild,
Than be the king of men elsewhere,
And most sovereign slave of care:
To have one moment of thy dawn,
Than share the city's year forlorn.

INSPIRATION ¹

WHATE'ER we leave to God, God does,
And blesses us;
The work we choose should be our own,
God leaves alone.

IF with light head erect I sing,
Though all the Muses lend their force,
From my poor love of anything,
The verse is weak and shallow as its source.

But if with bended neck I grope,
Listening behind me for my wit,
With faith superior to hope,
More anxious to keep back than forward it,

Making my soul accomplice there
Unto the flame my heart hath lit,
Then will the verse forever wear, —
Time cannot bend the line which God hath writ.

Always the general show of things
Floats in review before my mind,
And such true love and reverence brings,
That sometimes I forget that I am blind.

But now there comes unsought, unseen,
Some clear divine electuary,

¹ [Eighteen lines of this poem appear in *Week*, pp. 181, 182, 351, 372.]

And I, who had but sensual been,
Grow sensible, and as God is, am wary.

I hearing get, who had but ears,
And sight, who had but eyes before;
I moments live, who lived but years,
And truth discern, who knew but learning's lore.

I hear beyond the range of sound,
I see beyond the range of sight,
New earths and skies and seas around,
And in my day the sun doth pale his light.

A clear and ancient harmony
Pierces my soul through all its din,
As through its utmost melody, —
Farther behind than they, farther within.

More swift its bolt than lightning is,
Its voice than thunder is more loud,
It doth expand my privacies
To all, and leave me single in the crowd.

It speaks with such authority,
With so serene and lofty tone,
That idle Time runs gadding by,
And leaves me with Eternity alone.

Then chiefly is my natal hour,
And only then my prime of life;
Of manhood's strength it is the flower,
'T is peace's end, and war's beginning strife.

'T hath come in summer's broadest noon,
By a gray wall or some chance place,
Unseasoned time, insulted June,
And vexed the day with its presuming face.

Such fragrance round my couch it makes,
More rich than are Arabian drugs,
That my soul scents its life and wakes
The body up beneath its perfumed rugs.

Such is the Muse, the heavenly maid,
The star that guides our mortal course,
Which shows where life's true kernel's laid,
Its wheat's fine flour, and its undying force.

She with one breath attunes the spheres,
And also my poor human heart,
With one impulse propels the years
Around, and gives my throbbing pulse its start.

I will not doubt for evermore,
Nor falter from a steadfast faith,
For though the system be turned o'er,
God takes not back the word which once he saith.

I will, then, trust the love untold
Which not my worth nor want has bought,
Which wooed me young, and woos me old,
And to this evening hath me brought.

My memory I'll educate
To know the one historic truth,

Remembering to the latest date
The only true and sole immortal youth.

Be but thy inspiration given,
No matter through what danger sought,
I'll fathom hell or climb to heaven,
And yet esteem that cheap which love has bought.

Fame cannot tempt the bard
Who's famous with his God,
Nor laurel him reward
Who hath his Maker's nod.

THE AURORA OF GUIDO ¹

A FRAGMENT

THE god of day his car rolls up the slopes,
Reining his prancing steeds with steady hand;
The lingering moon through western shadows gropes,
While morning sheds its light o'er sea and land.

Castles and cities by the sounding main
Resound with all the busy din of life;
The fisherman unfurls his sails again;
And the recruited warrior bides the strife.

The early breeze ruffles the poplar leaves;
The curling waves reflect the unseen light;

¹ ["Suggested by the print of Guido's 'Aurora' sent by Mrs. Carlyle as a wedding gift to Mrs. Emerson." (Note in *Poems of Nature*.)]

The slumbering sea with the day's impulse heaves,
While o'er the western hill retires the drowsy night.

The seabirds dip their bills in Ocean's foam,
Far circling out over the frothy waves, —
.

TO THE MAIDEN IN THE EAST ¹

Low in the eastern sky
Is set thy glancing eye;
And though its gracious light
Ne'er riseth to my sight,
Yet every star that climbs
Above the gnarlèd limbs
Of yonder hill,
Conveys thy gentle will.

Believe I knew thy thought,
And that the zephyrs brought
Thy kindest wishes through,
As mine they bear to you;
That some attentive cloud
Did pause amid the crowd
Over my head,
While gentle things were said.

Believe the thrushes sung,
And that the flower-bells rung,
That herbs exhaled their scent,
And beasts knew what was meant,

¹ [Five stanzas of this poem appear in *Week*, pp. 46, 47.]

The trees a welcome waved,
And lakes their margins laved,
 When thy free mind
To my retreat did wind.

It was a summer eve,
The air did gently heave
While yet a low-hung cloud
Thy eastern skies did shroud;
The lightning's silent gleam,
Startling my drowsy dream,
 Seemed like the flash
Under thy dark eyelash.

From yonder comes the sun,
But soon his course is run,
Rising to trivial day
Along his dusty way;
But thy noontide completes
Only auroral heats,
 Nor ever sets,
To hasten vain regrets.

Direct thy pensive eye
Into the western sky;
And when the evening star
Does glimmer from afar
Upon the mountain line,
Accept it for a sign
 That I am near,
And thinking of thee here.

I'll be thy Mercury,
Thou Cytherea to me,
Distinguished by thy face
The earth shall learn my place;
As near beneath thy light
Will I outwear the night,
 With mingled ray
Leading the westward way.

Still will I strive to be
As if thou wert with me;
Whatever path I take,
It shall be for thy sake,
Of gentle slope and wide,
As thou wert by my side,
 Without a root
To trip thy gentle foot.

I'll walk with gentle pace,
And choose the smoothest place,
And careful dip the oar,
And shun the winding shore,
And gently steer my boat
Where water-lilies float,
 And cardinal-flowers
Stand in their sylvan bowers.

TO MY BROTHER

BROTHER, where dost thou dwell?

What sun shines for thee now?

Dost thou indeed fare well,

As we wished thee here below?

What season didst thou find?

'T was winter here.

Are not the Fates more kind

Than they appear?

Is thy brow clear again

As in thy youthful years?

And was that ugly pain

The summit of thy fears?

Yet thou wast cheery still;

They could not quench thy fire;

Thou didst abide their will,

And then retire.

Where chiefly shall I look

To feel thy presence near?

Along the neighboring brook

May I thy voice still hear?

Dost thou still haunt the brink

Of yonder river's tide?

And may I ever think

That thou art by my side?

What bird wilt thou employ
 To bring me word of thee?
 For it would give them joy —
 'T would give them liberty —
 To serve their former lord
 With wing and minstrelsy.

A sadder strain mixed with their song,
 They've slower built their nests;
 Since thou art gone
 Their lively labor rests.

Where is the finch, the thrush,
 I used to hear?
 Ah, they could well abide
 The dying year.

Now they no more return,
 I hear them not;
 They have remained to mourn,
 Or else forgot.

GREECE ¹

WHEN life contracts into a vulgar span,
 And human nature tires to be a man,
 I thank the gods for Greece,
 That permanent realm of peace.
 For as the rising moon far in the night
 Checkers the shade with her forerunning light,

¹ [The last four lines appear in *Week*, p. 54.]

So in my darkest hour my senses seem
To catch from her Acropolis a gleam.

Greece, who am I that should remember thee,
Thy Marathon and thy Thermopylæ?
Is my life vulgar, my fate mean,
Which on such golden memories can lean?

THE FUNERAL BELL

ONE more is gone
Out of the busy throng
That tread these paths;
The church-bell tolls,
Its sad knell rolls
To many hearths.

Flower-bells toll not,
Their echoes roll not
Upon my ear;
There still, perchance,
That gentle spirit haunts
A fragrant bier.

Low lies the pall,
Lowly the mourners all
Their passage grope;
No sable hue
Mars the serene blue
Of heaven's cope.

In distant dell
Faint sounds the funeral bell;
A heavenly chime;
Some poet there
Weaves the light-burthened air
Into sweet rhyme.

THE MOON

Time wears her not; she doth his chariot guide;
Mortality below her orb is placed.

RALEIGH.

THE full-orbed moon with unchanged ray
Mounts up the eastern sky,
Not doomed to these short nights for aye,
But shining steadily.

She does not wane, but my fortune,
Which her rays do not bless;
My wayward path declineth soon,
But she shines not the less.

And if she faintly glimmers here,
And palèd is her light,
Yet alway in her proper sphere
She's mistress of the night.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF ¹

THANK God who seasons thus the year,
And sometimes kindly slants his rays;
For in his winter he's most near
And plainest seen upon the shortest days.

Who gently tempers now his heats,
And then his harsher cold, lest we
Should surfeit on the summer's sweets,
Or pine upon the winter's crudity.

A sober mind will walk alone,
Apart from nature, if need be,
And only its own seasons own;
For nature leaving its humanity.

Sometimes a late autumnal thought
Has crossed my mind in green July,
And to its early freshness brought
Late ripened fruits, and an autumnal sky.

The evening of the year draws on,
The fields a later aspect wear;
Since Summer's garishness is gone,
Some grains of night tincture the noontide air.

¹ ["The first four of these stanzas (unnamed by Thoreau) were published in the Boston *Commonwealth* in 1863, under the title of 'The Soul's Season,' the remainder as 'The Fall of the Leaf.' There can be little doubt that they are parts of one complete poem." (Note in *Poems of Nature*.)]

Behold! the shadows of the trees
Now circle wider 'bout their stem,
Like sentries that by slow degrees
Perform their rounds, gently protecting them.

And as the year doth decline,
The sun allows a scantier light;
Behind each needle of the pine
There lurks a small auxiliar to the night.

I hear the cricket's slumbrous lay
Around, beneath me, and on high;
It rocks the night, it soothes the day,
And everywhere is Nature's lullaby.

But most he chirps beneath the sod,
When he has made his winter bed;
His creak grown fainter but more broad,
A film of autumn o'er the summer spread.

Small birds, in fleets migrating by,
Now beat across some meadow's bay,
And as they tack and veer on high,
With faint and hurried click beguile the way.

Far in the woods, these golden days,
Some leaf obeys its Maker's call;
And through their hollow aisles it plays
With delicate touch the prelude of the Fall.

Gently withdrawing from its stem,
It lightly lays itself along

Where the same hand hath pillowed them,
Resigned to sleep upon the old year's throng.

The loneliest birch is brown and sere,
The farthest pool is strewn with leaves,
Which float upon their watery bier,
Where is no eye that sees, no heart that grieves.

The jay screams through the chestnut wood;
The crisped and yellow leaves around
Are hue and texture of my mood,
And these rough burs my heirlooms on the ground.

The threadbare trees, so poor and thin,
They are no wealthier than I;
But with as brave a core within
They rear their boughs to the October sky.

Poor knights they are which bravely wait
The charge of Winter's cavalry,
Keeping a simple Roman state,
Discumbered of their Persian luxury.

THE THAW

I SAW the civil sun drying earth's tears,
Her tears of joy that only faster flowed.¹

Fain would I stretch me by the highway-side
To thaw and trickle with the melting snow;
That mingled, soul and body, with the tide,
I too may through the pores of nature flow.

¹ [See p. 120.]

A WINTER SCENE ¹

THE rabbit leaps,
The mouse out-creeps,
The flag out-peeps
 Beside the brook;
The ferret weeps,
The marmot sleeps,
The owlet keeps
 In his snug nook.

The apples thaw,
The ravens caw,
The squirrels gnaw
 The frozen fruit.
To their retreat
I track the feet
Of mice that eat
 The apple's root.

The snow-dust falls,
The otter crawls,
The partridge calls,
 Far in the wood.
The traveler dreams,
The tree-ice gleams,
The blue jay screams
 In angry mood.

¹ ["These stanzas formed part of the original manuscript of the essay on 'A Winter Walk,' but were excluded by Emerson." (Note in *Poems of Nature*.)]

The willows droop,
The alders stoop,
The pheasants group
 Beneath the snow.
The catkins green
Cast o'er the scene
A summer's sheen,
 A genial glow.

TO A STRAY FOWL

Poor bird! destined to lead thy life
 Far in the adventurous west,
And here to be debarred to-night
 From thy accustomed nest;
Must thou fall back upon old instinct now,
Well-nigh extinct under man's fickle care?
Did heaven bestow its quenchless inner light,
So long ago, for thy small want to-night?
Why stand'st upon thy toes to crow so late?
The moon is deaf to thy low feathered fate;
Or dost thou think so to possess the night,
And people the drear dark with thy brave sprite?
And now with anxious eye thou look'st about,
While the relentless shade draws on its veil,
For some sure shelter from approaching dews,
And the insidious steps of nightly foes.
I fear imprisonment has dulled thy wit,
Or ingrained servitude extinguished it.
But no; dim memory of the days of yore,
By Brahmapootra and the Jumna's shore,

Where thy proud race flew swiftly o'er the heath,
And sought its food the jungle's shade beneath,
Has taught thy wings to seek yon friendly trees,
As erst by Indus' banks and far Ganges.

POVERTY

A FRAGMENT

IF I am poor,
It is that I am proud;
If God has made me naked and a boor,
He did not think it fit his work to shroud.

The poor man comes direct from heaven to earth,
As stars drop down the sky, and tropic beams;
The rich receives in our gross air his birth,
As from low suns are slanted golden gleams.

Yon sun is naked, bare of satellite,
Unless our earth and moon that office hold;
Though his perpetual day feareth no night,
And his perennial summer dreads no cold.

Mankind may delve, but cannot my wealth spend;
If I no partial wealth appropriate,
No armèd ships unto the Indies send,
None robs me of my Orient estate.

PILGRIMS

“HAVE you not seen,
In ancient times,
Pilgrims pass by
Toward other climes,
With shining faces,
Youthful and strong,
Mounting this hill
With speech and with song?”

“Ah, my good sir,
I know not those ways;
Little my knowledge,
Tho’ many my days.
When I have slumbered,
I have heard sounds
As of travelers passing
These my grounds.

“’T was a sweet music
Wafted them by,
I could not tell
If afar off or nigh.
Unless I dreamed it,
This was of yore:
I never told it
To mortal before,
Never remembered
But in my dreams
What to me waking
A miracle seems.”

THE DEPARTURE

IN this roadstead I have ridden,
In this covert I have hidden;
Friendly thoughts were cliffs to me,
And I hid beneath their lee.

This true people took the stranger,
And warm-hearted housed the ranger;
They received their roving guest,
And have fed him with the best;

Whatsoe'er the land afforded
To the stranger's wish accorded;
Shook the olive, stripped the vine,
And expressed the strengthening wine.

And by night they did spread o'er him
What by day they spread before him; —
That good-will which was repast
Was his covering at last.

The stranger moored him to their pier
Without anxiety or fear;
By day he walked the sloping land,
By night the gentle heavens he scanned.

When first his bark stood inland
To the coast of that far Finland,
Sweet-watered brooks came tumbling to the shore
The weary mariner to restore.

And still he stayed from day to day
If he their kindness might repay;
 But more and more
The sullen waves came rolling toward the shore.

And still the more the stranger waited,
The less his argosy was freighted,
And still the more he stayed,
The less his debt was paid.

So he unfurled his shrouded mast
To receive the fragrant blast;
And that sane refreshing gale
Which had wooed him to remain
 Again and again,
It was that filled his sail
 And drove him to the main.

All day the low-hung clouds
 Dropt tears into the sea;
And the wind amid the shrouds
 Sighed plaintively.

INDEPENDENCE ¹

MY life more civil is and free
 Than any civil polity.

Ye princes, keep your realms
 And circumscribèd power,

¹ ["First printed in full in the Boston *Commonwealth*, October 30, 1863. The last fourteen lines had appeared in *The Dial* under the title of 'The Black Knight,' and are so reprinted in the Riverside Edition." (Note in *Poems of Nature*.)]

Not wide as are my dreams,
Nor rich as is this hour.

What can ye give which I have not?
What can ye take which I have got?
Can ye defend the dangerless?
Can ye inherit nakedness?

To all true wants Time's ear is deaf,
Penurious states lend no relief
Out of their pelf:
But a free soul — thank God —
Can help itself.

Be sure your fate
Doth keep apart its state,
Not linked with any band,
Even the noblest of the land;

In tented fields with cloth of gold
No place doth hold,
But is more chivalrous than they are,
And sigheth for a nobler war;
A finer strain its trumpet sings,
A brighter gleam its armor flings.

The life that I aspire to live
No man proposeth me;
No trade upon the street ¹
Wears its emblazonry.

² [In *The Dial* this line reads, "Only the promise of my heart."]

DING DONG¹

WHEN the world grows old by the chimney-side
Then forth to the youngling nooks I glide,
Where over the water and over the land
The bells are booming on either hand.

Now up they go ding, then down again dong,
And awhile they ring to the same old song,
For the metal goes round at a single bound,
A-cutting the fields with its measured sound,
While the tired tongue falls with a lengthened boom
As solemn and loud as the crack of doom.

Then changed is their measure to tone upon tone,
And seldom it is that one sound comes alone,
For they ring out their peals in a mingled throng,
And the breezes waft the loud ding-dong along.

When the echo hath reached me in this lone vale,
I am straightway a hero in coat of mail,
I tug at my belt and I march on my post,
And feel myself more than a match for a host.

OMNIPRESENCE

WHO equaleth the coward's haste,
And still inspires the faintest heart;
Whose lofty fame is not disgraced,
Though it assume the lowest part.

¹ ["A copy of this hitherto unpublished poem has been kindly furnished by Miss A. J. Ward." (Note in *Poems of Nature*.)]

INSPIRATION

If thou wilt but stand by my ear,
When through the field thy anthem's rung,
When that is done I will not fear
But the same power will abet my tongue.

MISSION

I've searched my faculties around,
To learn why life to me was lent:
I will attend the faintest sound,
And then declare to man what God hath meant.

DELAY

No generous action can delay
Or thwart our higher, steadier aims;
But if sincere and true are they,
It will arouse our sight, and nerve our frames.

PRAYER

GREAT God! I ask thee for no meaner pelf
Than that I may not disappoint myself;
That in my action I may soar as high
As I can now discern with this clear eye;

And next in value, which thy kindness lends,
That I may greatly disappoint my friends,
Howe'er they think or hope that it may be,
They may not dream how thou'st distinguished me;

That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,
And my life practice more than my tongue saith;
That my low conduct may not show,
Nor my relenting lines,
That I thy purpose did not know,
Or overrated thy designs.

FAMILIAR LETTERS OF THOREAU

Edited by **F. B. SANBORN**

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FAMILIAR LETTERS OF
THOREAU

I

YEARS OF DISCIPLINE

IT was a happy thought of Thoreau's friend Ellery Channing, himself a poet, to style our Concord hermit the "poet-naturalist;" for there seemed to be no year of his life and no hour of his day when Nature did not whisper some secret in his ear, — so intimate was he with her from childhood. In another connection, speaking of natural beauty, Channing said, "There is Thoreau, — he knows about it; give him sunshine and a handful of nuts, and he has enough." He was also a naturalist in the more customary sense, — one who studied and arranged methodically in his mind the facts of outward nature; a good botanist and ornithologist, a wise student of insects and fishes; an observer of the winds, the clouds, the seasons, and all that goes to make up what we call "weather" and "climate." Yet he was in heart a poet, and held all the accumulated knowledge of more than forty years not so much for use as for delight. As Gray's poor friend West said of himself, "like a clear-flowing stream, he reflected the beauteous prospect around;" and Mother Nature had given Thoreau for his prospect the meandering Indian river of Concord, the woodland pastures and fair lakes by which he dwelt or rambled most of his life. Born in the East Quarter of Concord, July 12, 1817, he died in the village, May 6, 1862; he was there fitted for

Harvard College, which he entered in 1833, graduating in 1837; and for the rest of his life was hardly away from the town for more than a year in all. Consequently his letters to his family are few, for he was usually among them; but when separated from his elder brother John, or his sisters Helen and Sophia, he wrote to them, and these are the earliest of his letters which have been preserved. Always thoughtful for others, he has left a few facts to aid his biographer, respecting his birth and early years. In his *Journal* of December 27, 1855, he wrote:—

“Recalled this evening, with the aid of Mother, the various houses (and towns) in which I have lived, and some events of my life. Born . . . in the Minott house on the Virginia Road, where Father occupied Grandmother's ‘thirds,’ carrying on the farm. The Catherines [had] the other half of the house, — Bob Catherine and [brother] John threw up the turkeys. Lived there about eight months; Si Merriam the next neighbor. Uncle David [Dunbar] died when I was six weeks old.¹ I was baptized in the old meeting-house, by Dr. Ripley, when I was three months, and did not cry. [In] the Red House, where Grandmother lived, we [had] the west side till October, 1818, — hiring of Josiah Davis, agent for the Woodward; there were Cousin Charles and Uncle Charles [Dunbar], more or less. According to the day-

¹ He was named David for this uncle; Dr. Ripley was the minister of the whole town in 1817. The Red House stood near the Emerson house on the Lexington road; the Woodward were a wealthy family, afterwards in Quincy, to which town Dr. Woodward left a large bequest.

book first used by Grandfather [Thoreau],¹ dated 1797 (his part cut out and [then] used by Father in Concord in 1808-9, and in Chelmsford in 1818-21), Father hired of Proctor [in Chelmsford], and shop of Spaulding. Chelmsford till March, 1821; last charge in Chelmsford about middle of March, 1821. Aunt Sarah taught me to walk there, when fourteen months old. Lived next the meeting-house, where they kept the powder in the garret. Father kept shop and painted signs, etc.

“Pope’s house, at South End in Boston (a ten-footer) five or six months, — moved from Chelmsford through Concord, and may have tarried in Concord a little while.

“Day-book says, ‘Moved to Pinkney Street [Boston], September 10, 1821, on Monday;’ Whitwell’s house, Pinckney Street, to March, 1823; brick house, Concord, to spring of 1826; Davis house (next to Samuel Hoar’s) to May 7, 1827; Shattuck house (now Wm. Munroe’s) to spring of 1835; Hollis Hall, Cambridge, 1833; Aunts’ house to spring of 1837. [This was what is now the inn called ‘Thoreau House.’] At Brownson’s [Canton] while teaching in winter of 1835. Went to New York with Father peddling in 1836.”

This brings the date down to the year in which Henry Thoreau left college, and when the family letters begin.

¹ John Thoreau, grandfather of Henry, born at St. Helier’s, Jersey, April, 1754, was a sailor on board the American privateer General Lincoln, November, 1779, and recognized La Sensible, French frigate, which carried John Adams from Boston to France. See *Journal*, vol. v, June 11, 1853. This John Thoreau, son of Philip, died in Concord, 1800.

The notes continue, and now begin to have a literary value.

“ Parkman house to fall of 1844; was graduated in 1837; kept town school a fortnight in 1837; began the big Red Journal, October, 1837; found my first arrowheads, fall of 1837; wrote a lecture (my first) on Society, March 14, 1838, and read it before the Lyceum, in the Masons' Hall, April 11, 1838; went to Maine for a school in May, 1838; commenced school [in the Parkman house¹] in the summer of 1838; wrote an essay on ‘Sound and Silence’ December, 1838; fall of 1839 up the Merrimack to White Mountains; ‘Aulus Persius Flaccus’ (first printed paper of consequence), February 10, 1840; the Red Journal of 546 pages ended June, 1840; Journal of 396 pages ended January 31, 1841.

“ Went to R. W. Emerson's in spring of 1841 [about April 25], and stayed there to summer of 1843; went to [William Emerson's], Staten Island, May, 1843, and returned in December, or to Thanksgiving, 1843; made pencils in 1844; Texas house to August 29, 1850; at

¹ This had been the abode of old Deacon Parkman, a granduncle of the late Francis Parkman, the historian, and son of the Westborough clergyman from whom this distinguished family descends. Deacon Parkman was a merchant in Concord, and lived in what was then a good house. It stood in the middle of the village, where the Public Library now is. The “Texas” house was built by Henry Thoreau and his father John; it was named from a section of the village then called “Texas,” because a little remote from the churches and schools; perhaps the same odd fancy that had bestowed the name of “Virginia” on the road of Thoreau's birthplace. The “Yellow House reformed” was a small cottage rebuilt and enlarged by the Thoreaus in 1850; in this, on the main street, Henry and his father and mother died.

Walden, July, 1845, to fall of 1847; then at R. W. Emerson's to fall of 1848, or while he was in Europe; Yellow House (reformed) till the present."

As may be inferred from this simple record of the many mansions, chiefly small ones, in which he had spent his first thirty-eight years, there was nothing distinguished in the fortunes of Thoreau's family, who were small merchants, artisans, or farmers mostly. On the father's side they were from the isle of Jersey, where a French strain mingled with his English or Scandinavian blood; on the other side he was of Scotch and English descent, counting Jones, Dunbar, and Burns among his feminine ancestors. Liveliness and humor came to him from his Scotch connection; from father and grandfather he inherited a grave steadiness of mind rather at variance with his mother's vivacity. Manual dexterity was also inherited; so that he practiced the simpler mechanic arts with ease and skill; his mathematical training and his outdoor habits fitted him for a land-surveyor; and by that art, as well as by pencil-making, lecturing, and writing, he paid his way in the world, and left a small income from his writings to those who survived him. He taught pupils also, as did his brother and sisters; but it was not an occupation that he long followed after John's death in 1842. With these introductory statements we may proceed to Thoreau's first correspondence with his brother and sisters.

As an introduction to the correspondence, and a key to the young man's view of life, a passage may be taken from Thoreau's "part" at his college commencement,

August 16, 1837. He was one of two to hold what was called a "Conference" on "The Commercial Spirit," — his alternative or opponent in the dispute being Henry Vose, also of Concord, who, in later years, was a Massachusetts judge. Henry Thoreau,¹ then just twenty, said: —

"The characteristic of our epoch is perfect freedom, — freedom of thought and action. The indignant Greek, the oppressed Pole, the jealous American assert it. The skeptic no less than the believer, the heretic no less than the faithful child of the church, have begun to enjoy it. It has generated an unusual degree of energy and activity; it has generated the *commercial spirit*. Man thinks faster and freer than ever before. He, moreover, moves faster and freer. He is more restless, because he is more independent than ever. The winds and the waves are not enough for him; he must needs ransack the bowels of the earth, that he may make for himself a highway of iron over its surface.

"Indeed, could one examine this beehive of ours from an observatory among the stars, he would perceive an unwonted degree of bustle in these later ages. There would be hammering and chipping in one quarter; baking and brewing, buying and selling, money-changing and speechmaking in another. What impression would he receive from so general and impartial a survey. Would it appear to him that mankind

¹ During the greater part of his college course he signed himself D. H. Thoreau, as he was christened (David Henry); but being constantly called "Henry," he put this name first about the time he left college, and was seldom afterwards known by the former initials.

used this world as not abusing it? Doubtless he would first be struck with the profuse beauty of our orb; he would never tire of admiring its varied zones and seasons, with their changes of living. He could not but notice that restless animal for whose sake it was contrived; but where he found one man to admire with him his fair dwelling-place, the ninety and nine would be scraping together a little of the gilded dust upon its surface. . . . We are to look chiefly for the origin of the commercial spirit, and the power that still cherishes and sustains it, in a blind and unmanly love of wealth. Wherever this exists, it is too sure to become the ruling spirit; and, as a natural consequence, it infuses into all our thoughts and affections a degree of its own selfishness; we become selfish in our patriotism, selfish in our domestic relations, selfish in our religion.

“Let men, true to their natures, cultivate the moral affections, lead manly and independent lives; let them make riches the means and not the end of existence, and we shall hear no more of the commercial spirit. The sea will not stagnate, the earth will be as green as ever, and the air as pure. This curious world which we inhabit is more wonderful than it is convenient; more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired and enjoyed than used. The order of things should be somewhat reversed; the seventh should be man’s day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow; and the other six his Sabbath of the affections and the soul, — in which to range this widespread garden, and drink in the soft influences and sublime revelations of Nature. . . . The spirit we

are considering is not altogether and without exception bad. We rejoice in it as one more indication of the entire and universal freedom that characterizes the age in which we live, — as an indication that the human race is making one more advance in that infinite series of progressions which awaits it. We glory in those very excesses which are a source of anxiety to the wise and good; as an evidence that man will not always be the slave of matter, — but ere long, casting off those earth-born desires which identify him with the brute, shall pass the days of his sojourn in this his nether paradise, as becomes the Lord of Creation.”¹

¹ The impression made on one classmate and former room-mate (“chum”) of Thoreau, by this utterance, will be seen by this fragment of a letter from James Richardson of Dedham (afterwards Reverend J. Richardson), dated Dedham, September 7, 1837: —

“FRIEND THOREAU, — After you had finished your part in the Performances of Commencement (the tone and sentiment of which, by the way, I liked much, as being of a sound philosophy), I hardly saw you again at all. Neither at Mr. Quincy’s levee, neither at any of our classmates’ evening entertainments, did I find you; though for the purpose of taking a farewell, and leaving you some memento of an old chum, as well as on matters of business, I much wished to see your face once more. Of course you must be present at our October meeting, — notice of the time and place for which will be given in the newspapers. I hear that you are comfortably located, in your native town, as the guardian of its children, in the immediate vicinity, I suppose, of one of our most distinguished apostles of the future, R. W. Emerson, and situated under the ministry of our old friend Reverend Barzillai Frost, to whom please make my remembrances. I heard from you, also, that Concord Academy, lately under the care of Mr. Phineas Allen of Northfield, is now vacant of a preceptor; should Mr. Hoar find it difficult to get a scholar college-distinguished, perhaps he would take up with one, who, though in many respects a critical thinker, and a careful philosopher of language among other

This passage is noteworthy as showing how early the philosophic mind was developed in Thoreau, and how much his thought and expression were influenced by Emerson's first book, — "Nature." But the soil in which that germinating seed fell was naturally prepared to receive it; and the wide diversity between the master and the disciple soon began to appear. In 1863, reviewing Thoreau's work, Emerson said, "That oaken strength which I noted whenever he walked or worked, or surveyed wood-lots, — the same unhesitating hand with which a field-laborer accosts a piece of work which I should shun as a waste of strength, Henry shows in his literary task. He has muscle, and ventures on and performs feats which I am forced to decline. In reading him I find the same thoughts, the same spirit that is in me; but he takes a step beyond, and illustrates by excellent images that which I should have conveyed in a sleepy generalization." True as this is, it omits one point of difference only too well known to Emerson, — the controversial turn of Thoreau's mind, in which he was so unlike Emerson and Alcott, and which must have given to his youthful utterances in company the air of something requiring an apology.

This, at all events, seems to have been the feeling of Helen Thoreau,¹ whose pride in her brother was such things, has never distinguished himself in his class as a regular attendant on college studies and rules. If so, could you do me the kindness to mention my name to him as of one intending to make teaching his profession, at least for a part of his life. If recommendations are necessary, President Quincy has offered me one, and I can easily get others."

¹ This eldest of the children of John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar

that she did not wish to see him misunderstood. A pleasing indication of both these traits is seen in the first extant letter of Thoreau to this sister. I have this in an autograph copy made by Mr. Emerson, when he was preparing the letters for partial publication, soon after Henry's death. For some reason he did not insert it in his volume; but it quite deserves to be printed, as indicating the period when it was clear to Thoreau that he must think for himself, whatever those around him might think.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

CONCORD, October 27, 1837.

DEAR HELEN, — Please you, let the defendant say a few words in defense of his long silence. You know we have hardly done our own deeds, thought our own thoughts, or lived our own lives hitherto. For a man to act himself, he must be perfectly free; otherwise he is in danger of losing all sense of responsibility or of self-respect. Now when such a state of things exists, that the sacred opinions one advances in argument are apologized for by his friends, before his face, lest his hearers receive a wrong impression of the man, — when such gross injustice is of frequent occurrence, where shall we look, and not look in vain, for men, deeds, thoughts? As well apologize for the grape that it is

was born October 22, 1812, and died June 14, 1849. Her grandmother, Mary Jones of Weston, Mass., belonged to a Tory family, and several of the Jones brothers served as officers in the British army against General Washington.

sour, or the thunder that it is noisy, or the lightning that it tarries not.

Further, letter-writing too often degenerates into a communicating of facts, and not of truths; of other men's deeds and not our thoughts. What are the convulsions of a planet, compared with the emotions of the soul? or the rising of a thousand suns, if that is not enlightened by a ray?

Your affectionate brother,

HENRY.

It is presumed the tender sister did not need a second lesson; and equally that Henry did not see fit always to write such letters as he praised above, — for he was quite ready to give his correspondents facts, no less than thoughts, especially in his family letters.

Next to this epistle, chronologically, comes one in the conventional dialect of the American Indian, as handed down by travelers and romancers, by Jefferson, Chateaubriand, Lewis, Clarke, and Fenimore Cooper. John Thoreau, Henry's brother, was born in 1815 and died January 11, 1842. He was teaching at Taunton in 1837.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

(Written as from one Indian to another.)

MUSKETAQUID, 202 Summers, two Moons, eleven Suns,
since the coming of the Pale Faces.

(November 11, 1837.)

TAHATAWAN, Sachimaussan, to his brother sachem,
Hopeful of Hopewell, — hoping that he is well : —

Brother: It is many suns that I have not seen the

print of thy moccasins by our council-fire; the Great Spirit has blown more leaves from the trees, and many clouds from the land of snows have visited our lodge; the earth has become hard, like a frozen buffalo-skin, so that the trampling of many herds is like the Great Spirit's thunder; the grass on the great fields is like the old man of many winters, and the small song sparrow prepares for his flight to the land whence the summer comes.

Brother: I write these things because I know that thou lovest the Great Spirit's creatures, and wast wont to sit at thy lodge-door, when the maize was green, to hear the bluebird's song. So shalt thou, in the land of spirits, not only find good hunting-grounds and sharp arrowheads, but much music of birds.

Brother: I have been thinking how the Pale-Faces have taken away our lands, — and was a woman. You are fortunate to have pitched your wigwam nearer to the great salt lake, where the Pale-Face can never plant corn.

Brother: I need not tell thee how we hunted on the lands of the Dundees, — a great war-chief never forgets the bitter taunts of his enemies. Our young men called for strong water; they painted their faces and dug up the hatchet. But their enemies, the Dundees, were women; they hastened to cover their hatchets with wampum. Our braves are not many; our enemies took a few strings from the heap their fathers left them, and our hatchets are buried. But not Tahatawan's; his heart is of rock when the Dundees sing, — his hatchet cuts deep into the Dundee braves.

Brother: There is dust on my moccasins; I have journeyed to the White Lake, in the country of the Ninares.¹ The Long-Knife has been there, — like a woman I paddled his war-canoe. But the spirits of my fathers were angered; the waters were ruffled, and the Bad Spirit troubled the air.

The hearts of the Lee-vites are gladdened; the young Peacock has returned to his lodge at Naushawtuck. He is the Medicine of his tribe, but his heart is like the dry leaves when the whirlwind breathes. He has come to help choose new chiefs for the tribe, in the great council-house, when two suns are past. — There is no seat for Tahatawan in the council-house. He lets the squaws talk, — his voice is heard above the war-whoop of his tribe, piercing the hearts of his foes; his legs are stiff, he cannot sit.

Brother: Art thou waiting for the spring, that the geese may fly low over thy wigwam? Thy arrows are sharp, thy bow is strong. Has Anawan killed all the eagles? The crows fear not the winter. Tahatawan's eyes are sharp, — he can track a snake in the grass, he

¹ White Pond, in the district called "Nine-Acre Corner," is here meant; the "Lee-vites" were a family then living on Lee's Hill. Naushawtuck is another name for this hill, where the old Tahatawan lived at times, before the English settled in Concord in September, 1635. The real date of this letter is November 11-14, 1837, and between its two dates the Massachusetts State election was held. The "great council-house" was the Boston State-House, to which the Concord people were electing deputies; the "Eagle-Beak" named on the next page was doubtless Samuel Hoar, the first citizen of the town, and for a time Member of Congress from Middlesex County. He was the father of Rockwood and Frisbie Hoar, afterwards judge and senator respectively.

knows a friend from a foe; he welcomes a friend to his lodge though the ravens croak.

Brother: Hast thou studied much in the medicine-books of the Pale-Faces? Dost thou understand the long talk of the Medicine whose words are like the music of the mockingbird? But our chiefs have not ears to hear him; they listen like squaws to the council of old men, — they understand not his words. But, Brother, he never danced the war-dance, nor heard the war-whoop of his enemies. He was a squaw; he stayed by the wigwam when the braves were out, and tended the tame buffaloes.

Fear not; the Dundees have faint hearts and much wampum. When the grass is green on the Great Fields, and the small titmouse returns again, we will hunt the buffalo together.

Our old men say they will send the young chief of the Karlisles, who lives in the green wigwam and is a great Medicine, that his word may be heard in the long talk which the wise men are going to hold at Shawmut, by the salt lake. He is a great talk, and will not forget the enemies of his tribe.

14th Sun. The fire has gone out in the council-house. The words of our old men have been like the vaunts of the Dundees. The Eagle-Beak was moved to talk like a silly Pale-Face, and not as becomes a great war-chief in a council of braves. The young Peacock is a woman among braves; he heard not the words of the old men, — like a squaw he looked at his medicine-paper.¹ The young chief of the green wigwam has hung

¹ A delicate sarcasm on young B., who could not finish his speech

up his moccasins; he will not leave his tribe till after the buffalo have come down on to the plains.

Brother: This is a long talk, but there is much meaning to my words; they are not like the thunder of canes when the lightning smites them. Brother, I have just heard *thy talk* and am well pleased; thou art getting to be a great Medicine. The Great Spirit confound the enemies of thy tribe.

TAHATAWAN.

His mark [a bow and arrow].

This singular letter was addressed to John Thoreau at Taunton, and was so carefully preserved in the family that it must have had value in their eyes, as recalling traits of the two Thoreau brothers, and also events in the village life of Concord, more interesting to the young people of 1837 than to the present generation. Some of its parables are easy to read, others quite obscure. The annual State election was an important event to Henry Thoreau then, — more so than it afterwards appeared; and he was certainly on the Whig side in politics, like most of the educated youths of Concord. His “young chief of the Karlises” was Albert Nelson, son of a Carlisle physician, who began to practice law in Concord in 1836, and was afterwards in town-meeting without looking at his notes. The allusion to the “Medicine whose words are like the music of the mockingbird” is hard to explain; it may mean Edward Everett, then Governor of Massachusetts, or, possibly, Emerson, whose lectures began to attract notice in Boston and Cambridge. It can hardly mean Wendell Phillips, though his melodious eloquence had lately been heard in attacks upon slavery.

chief justice of the Superior Court of the County of Suffolk. He was defeated at the election of 1837, as a Whig candidate for the legislature, by a Democrat. Henry Vose, above named, writing from "Butternuts," in New York, three hundred miles west of Concord, October 22, 1837, said to Thoreau: "You envy my happy situation, and mourn over your fate, which condemns you to loiter about Concord and grub among clamshells [for Indian relics]. If this were your only source of enjoyment while in Concord, — but I know that it is not. I well remember that 'antique and fish-like' office of *Major* Nelson (to whom, and to Mr. Dennis, and Bemis, and John Thoreau, I wish to be remembered); and still more vividly do I remember the fairer portion of the community in C." This indicates a social habit in Henry and John Thoreau, which the Indian "talk" also implies. Tahatawan, whom Henry here impersonated, was the mythical Sachem of Musketaquid (the Algonquin name for Concord River and region), whose fishing and hunting lodge was on the hill Naushawtuck, between the two rivers so much navigated by the Thoreaus. In 1837 the two brothers were sportsmen, and went shooting over the Concord meadows and moors, but of course the "buffalo" was a figure of speech; they never shot anything larger than a raccoon. A few years later they gave up killing the game.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

CONCORD, February 10, 1838.

DEAR JOHN, — Dost expect to elicit a spark from so dull a steel as myself, by that flinty subject of thine?

Truly, one of your copper percussion caps would have fitted this nail-head better.

Unfortunately, the "Americana"¹ has hardly two words on the subject. The process is very simple. The stone is struck with a mallet so as to produce pieces sharp at one end, and blunt at the other. These are laid upon a steel line (probably a chisel's edge), and again struck with the mallet, and flints of the required size are broken off. A skillful workman may make a thousand in a day.

So much for the "Americana." Dr. Jacob Bigelow in his "Technology," says, "Gunflints are formed by a skillful workman, who breaks them out with a hammer, a roller, and steel chisel, with small, repeated strokes."

Your ornithological commission shall be executed.
When are you coming home?

Your affectionate brother,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT TAUNTON).

CONCORD, March 17, 1838.

DEAR JOHN, — Your box of relics came safe to hand, but was speedily deposited on the carpet, I assure you.

¹ *Americana*, in this note, is the old *Encyclopedia Americana*, which had been edited from the German *Conversations-Lexicon*, and other sources, by Dr. Francis Lieber, T. G. Bradford, and other Boston scholars, ten years earlier, and was the only convenient book of reference at Thoreau's hand. The inquiry of John Thoreau is another evidence of the interest he took, like his brother, in the Indians and their flint arrowheads. The relics mentioned in the next letter were doubtless Indian weapons and utensils, very common about Taunton in the region formerly controlled by King Philip.

What could it be? Some declared it must be Taunton herrings: "Just nose it, sir!" So down we went on to our knees, and commenced smelling in good earnest, — now horizontally from this corner to that, now perpendicularly from the carpet up, now diagonally, — and finally with a sweeping movement describing the circumference. But it availed not. Taunton herring would not be smelled. So we e'en proceeded to open it *vi et chisel*. What an array of nails! Four nails make a quarter, four quarters a yard, — i' faith, this is n't cloth measure! Blaze away, old boy! Clap in another wedge, then! There, softly! she begins to gape. Just give that old stickler, with a black hat on, another hoist. Aye, we'll pare his nails for him! Well done, old fellow, there's a breathing-hole for you. "Drive it in!" cries one; "Nip it off!" cries another. Be easy, I say. What's done may be undone. Your richest veins don't lie nearest the surface. Suppose we sit down and enjoy the prospect, for who knows but we may be disappointed? When they opened Pandora's box, all the contents escaped except Hope, but in this case hope is uppermost, and will be the first to escape when the box is opened. However, the general voice was for kicking the coverlid off.

The relics have been arranged numerically on a table. When shall we set up housekeeping? Miss Ward thanks you for her share of the spoils; also accept many thanks from your humble servant "for yourself."

I have a proposal to make. Suppose by the time you are released we should start in company for the West,

and there either establish a school jointly, or procure ourselves separate situations. Suppose, moreover, you should get ready to start previous to leaving Taunton, to save time. Go *I* must, at all events. Dr. Jarvis enumerates nearly a dozen schools which I could have, — all such as would suit you equally well.¹ I wish you would write soon about this. It is high season to start. The canals are now open, and traveling comparatively cheap. I think I can borrow the cash in this town. There 's nothing like trying.

Brigham wrote you a few words on the 8th, which father took the liberty to read, with the advice and consent of the family. He wishes you to send him those [numbers] of the "Library of Health" received since 1838, if you are in Concord; otherwise, he says you need not trouble yourself about it at present. He is in C., and enjoying better health than usual. But one number, and that you have, has been received.

The bluebirds made their appearance the 14th day of March; robins and pigeons have also been seen. Mr. Emerson has put up the bluebird-box in due form. All send their love.

From your aff. br.

H. D. THOREAU.

[Postscript by Helen Thoreau.]

DEAR JOHN, — Will you have the kindness to inquire at Mr. Marston's for an old singing-book I left there, —

¹ Dr. Edward Jarvis, born in Concord (1803), had gone to Louisville, Ky., in April, 1837, and was thriving there as a physician. He knew the Thoreaus well, and gave them good hopes of success in Ohio or Kentucky as teachers. The plan was soon abandoned, and Henry

the "Handel and Haydn Collection," without a cover? Have you ever got those red handkerchiefs? Much love to the Marstons, Crockers, and Muenschers. Mr. Josiah Davis has failed. Mr. and Mrs. Howe have both written again, urging my going to Roxbury; which I suppose I shall do. What day of the month shall you return?

HELEN.

One remark in this letter calls for attention, — that concerning the "bluebird-box" for Mr. Emerson. In 1853 Emerson wrote in his journal: "Long ago I wrote of Gifts, and neglected a capital example. John Thoreau, Jr., one day put a bluebird's box on my barn, — fifteen years ago it must be, — and there it still is, with every summer a melodious family in it, adorning the place and singing his praises. There's a gift for you, — which cost the giver no money, but nothing which he bought could have been so good. I think of another, quite inestimable. John Thoreau knew how much I should value a head of little Waldo, then five years old. He came to me and offered to take him to a daguerreotypist who was then in town, and he (Thoreau) would see it well done. He did it, and brought me the daguerre, which I thankfully paid for. A few months after, my boy died; and I have since to thank John Thoreau for that wise and gentle piece of friendship."

Little Waldo Emerson died January 27, 1842, and John Thoreau the same month; so that this taking of went to Maine to find a school, but without success. See Sanborn's *Thoreau*, p. 57.

the portrait must have been but a few months before his own death, January 11. Henry Thoreau was then living in the Emerson family.

TO JOHN THOREAU (AT WEST ROXBURY).

CONCORD, July 8, 1838.

DEAR JOHN, — We heard from Helen to-day, and she informs us that you are coming home by the first of August. Now I wish you to write and let me know exactly when your vacation takes place, that I may take one at the same time. I am in school from 8 to 12 in the morning, and from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. After that I read a little Greek or English, or, for variety, take a stroll in the fields. We have not had such a year for berries this long time, — the earth is actually blue with them. High blueberries, three kinds of low, thimble- and raspberries constitute my diet at present. (Take notice, — I only diet between meals.) Among my deeds of charity, I may reckon the picking of a cherry tree for two helpless single ladies, who live under the hill; but i' faith, it was robbing Peter to pay Paul, — for while I was exalted in charity towards them, I had no mercy on my own stomach. Be advised, my love for currants continues.

The only addition that I have made to my stock of ornithological information is in the shape not of a *Fring. melod.*, — but surely a melodious *Fringilla*, — the *F. juncorum*, or rush-sparrow. I had long known him by note, but never by name.

Report says that Elijah Stearns is going to take the town school. I have four scholars, and one more en-

gaged. Mr. Fenner left town yesterday. Among occurrences of ill omen may be mentioned the falling out and cracking of the inscription stone of Concord Monument.¹ Mrs. Lowell and children are at Aunts'. Peabody [a college classmate] walked up last Wednesday, spent the night, and took a stroll in the woods.

Sophia says I must leave off and pen a few lines for her to Helen: so good-by. Love from all, and among them your aff. brother,

H. D. T.

The school above mentioned as begun by Henry Thoreau in this summer of 1838 was joined in by John, after finishing his teaching at West Roxbury, and was continued for several years. It was in this school that Louisa Alcott and her sister received some instruction, after their father removed from Boston to Concord, in the spring of 1840. It was opened in the Parkman house, where the family then lived, and soon after was transferred to the building of the Concord Academy,² not far off. John Thoreau taught the English branches and mathematics; Henry taught Latin and Greek and the higher mathematics,—and it was the custom of both brothers to go walking with their pupils one afternoon each week. It is as a professional schoolmaster that Henry thus writes to his sister Helen, then teaching at Roxbury, after a like experience in Taunton.

¹ This was the old monument of the Fight in 1775, for the dedication of which Emerson wrote his hymn, "By the rude bridge." This was sung by Thoreau, among others, to the tune of Old Hundred.

² For twenty-five years (1866–91) the house of Ellery Channing, and now of Charles Emerson, nephew of Waldo Emerson.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

CONCORD, October 6, 1838.

DEAR HELEN, — I dropped Sophia's letter into the box immediately on taking yours out, else the tone of the former had been changed.

I have no acquaintance with "Cleaveland's First Lessons," though I have peeped into his abridged grammar, which I should think very well calculated for beginners, — at least for such as would be likely to wear out one book before they would be prepared for the abstruser parts of grammar. Ahem!

As no one can tell what was the Roman pronunciation, each nation makes the Latin conform, for the most part, to the rules of its own language; so that with us of the vowels only A has a peculiar sound. In the end of a word of more than one syllable it is sounded like "ah," as *pennah*, *Lydiah*, *Hannah*, etc., without regard to case; but "da" is never sounded "*dah*," because it is a monosyllable. All terminations in *es*, and plural cases in *os*, as you know, are pronounced long, — as *homines* (hominese), *dominos* (dominose), or, in English, *Johnny Vose*. For information, see Adams' "Latin Grammar," before the Rudiments.

This is all law and gospel in the eyes of the world; but remember I am speaking, as it were, in the third person, and should sing quite a different tune if it were I that had made the quire. However, one must occasionally hang his harp on the willows, and play on the Jew's harp, in such a strange country as this.

One of your young ladies wishes to study mental

philosophy, hey? Well, tell her that she has the very best text-book that I know of in her possession already. If she do not believe it, then she should have bespoken another better in another world, and not have expected to find one at "Little & Wilkins." But if she wishes to know how poor an apology for a mental philosophy men have tacked together, synthetically or analytically, in these latter days, — how they have squeezed the infinite mind into a compass that would not nonplus a surveyor of Eastern Lands — making Imagination and Memory to lie still in their respective apartments like ink-stand and wafers in a lady's escritoire, — why let her read Locke, or Stewart, or Brown. The fact is, mental philosophy is very like Poverty, which, you know, begins at home; and indeed, when it goes abroad, it is poverty itself.

Chorus. I should think an abridgment of one of the above authors, or of Ambercrombie, would answer her purpose. It may set her a-thinking. Probably there are many systems in the market of which I am ignorant.

As for themes, say first "Miscellaneous Thoughts." Set one up to a window, to note what passes in the street, and make her comments thereon; or let her gaze in the fire, or into a corner where there is a spider's web, and philosophize, moralize, theorize, or what not. What their hands find to putter about, or their minds to think about, that let them write about. To say nothing of advantage or disadvantage of this, that, or the other, let them set down their ideas at any given season, preserving the chain of thought as complete as may be.

This is the style pedagogical. I am much obliged to you for your piece of information. Knowing your dislike to a sentimental letter, I remain

Your affectionate brother,

H. D. T.

The next letter to Helen carries this pedagogical style a little farther, for it is in Latin, addressed "Ad Helenam L. Thoreau, Roxbury, Mass.," and post-marked "Concord, Jan. 25" (1840).

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

CONCORDIAE, Dec. Kal. Feb. A. D. MDCCCXL.

CARA SOROR, — Est magnus acervus nivis ad limina, et frigus intolerabile intus. Coelum ipsum ruit, credo, et terram operit. Sero stratum linquo et mature repeto; in fenestris multa pruina prospectum absumit; et hic miser scribo, non currente calamo, nam digiti mentesque torpescunt. Canerem cum Horatio, si vox non faucibus haeserit, —

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum
Nawshawtucl, nec jam sustineant onus
Silvae laborantes, geluque
Flumina constiterint acuto?

Dissolve frigus, ligna super foco
Large reponens, etc.

Sed olim, Musa mutata, et laetiore plectro,

Neque jam stabulis gaudet pecus, aut arator igne,
Nec prata canis albicant pruinis;
Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus imminente luna.

Quam turdus ferrugineus ver reduxerit, tu, spero,

linques curas scholasticas, et, negotio religato, desipere in loco audebis; aut mecum inter sylvas, aut super scopulos Pulchri-Portus, aut in cymba super lacum Waldensem, mulcens fluctus manu, aut speciem miratus sub undas.

Bulwerius est mihi nomen incognitum, — unus ex ignobile vulgo, nec refutandus nec laudandus. Certe alicui nonnullam honorem habeo qui insanabili cacoethe scribendi teneatur.

Specie flagrantis Lexingtonis non somnia deturbat? At non Vulcanum Neptunumque culpemus, cum superstitioso grege. Natura curat animalculis aequae ac hominibus; cum serena, tum procellosa, amica est.

Si amas historiam et fortia facta heroum, non depone Rollin, precor; ne Clio offendas nunc, nec illa det veniam olim. Quos libros Latinos legis? legis, inquam, non studes. Beatus qui potest suos libellos tractare, et saepe perlegere, sine metu domini urgentis! ab otio injurioso procul est: suos amicos et vocare et dimittere quandocunque velit, potest. Bonus liber opus nobilissimum hominis. Hinc ratio non modo cur legeres, sed cur tu quoque scriberes; nec lectores carent; ego sum. Si non librum meditaris, libellum certe. Nihil posteris proderit te spirasse, et vitam nunc leniter nunc aspere egisse; sed cogitasse praecipue et scripsisse. Vereor ne tibi pertaesum hujus epistolae sit; necnon alma lux caret,

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbrae.

Quamobrem vale, — imo valet, et requiescatis placide, Sorores.

H. D. THOREAUS.

Memento scribere!

CARA SOPHIA, — Samuel Niger crebris aegrotationibus, quae agilitatem et aequum animum abstulere, obnoxius est; iis temporibus ad cellam descendit, et multas horas (ibi) manet.

Flores, ah crudelis pruina! parvo leti discrimine sunt. Cactus frigore ustus est, gerania vero adhuc vigent.

Conventus sociabiles hac hieme reconstituti fuere. Conveniunt (?) ad meum domum mense quarto vel quinto, ut tu hic esse possis. Matertera Sophia cum nobis remanet; quando urbem revertet non scio. Gravedine etiamnum, sed non tam aegre, laboramus.

Adolescentula E. White apud pagum paulisper moratur. Memento scribere intra duas hebdomedas.

Te valere desiderium est

Tui Matris,

C. THOREAUS.

P. S. Epistolam die solis proxima expectamus.
(Amanuense, H. D. T.)

Barring a few slips, this is a good and lively piece of Latin, and noticeable for its thought as well as its learning and humor. The poets were evidently his favorites among Latin authors. Shall we attempt a free translation, such as Thoreau would give?

VERNACULAR VERSION.

CONCORD, January 23, 1840.

DEAR SISTER, — There is a huge snow-drift at the door, and the cold inside is intolerable. The very sky is coming down, I guess, and covering up the ground.

I turn out late in the morning, and go to bed early; there is thick frost on the windows, shutting out the view; and here I write in pain, for fingers and brains are numb. I would chant with Horace, if my voice did not stick in my throat, —

See how Naushawtuct, deep in snow,
Stands glittering, while the bending woods
Scarce bear their burden, and the floods
Feel arctic winter stay their flow.

Pile on the firewood, melt the cold,
Spare nothing, etc.

But soon, changing my tune, and with a cheerfuller note, I'll say, —

No longer the flock huddles up in the stall, the plowman bends over
the fire,

No longer frost whitens the meadow;

But the goddess of love, while the moon shines above,
Sets us dancing in light and in shadow.

When Robin Redbreast brings back the springtime, I trust that you will lay your school duties aside, cast off care, and venture to be gay now and then; roaming with me in the woods, or climbing the Fair Haven cliffs, — or else, in my boat on Walden, let the water kiss your hand, or gaze at your image in the wave.

Bulwer is to me a name unknown, — one of the unnoticed crowd, attracting neither blame nor praise. To be sure, I hold any one in some esteem who is helpless in the grasp of the writing demon.

Does not the image of the Lexington afire trouble your dreams? ¹ But we may not, like the superstitious

¹ The steamer Lexington lately burnt on Long Island Sound, with Dr. Follen on board.

mob, blame Vulcan or Neptune, — neither fire nor water was in fault. Nature takes as much care for midgets as for mankind; she is our friend in storm and in calm.

If you like history, and the exploits of the brave, don't give up Rollin, I beg; thus would you displease Clio, who might not forgive you hereafter. What Latin are you reading? I mean *reading*, not studying. Blessed is the man who can have his library at hand, and oft peruse the books, without the fear of a task-master! he is far enough from harmful idleness, who can call in and dismiss these friends when he pleases. An honest book 's the noblest work of man. There 's a reason, now, not only for your reading, but for writing something, too. You will not lack readers, — here am I, for one. If you cannot compose a volume, then try a tract. It will do the world no good, hereafter, if you merely exist, and pass life smoothly or roughly; but to have thoughts, and write them down, that helps greatly.

I fear you will tire of this epistle; the light of day is dwindling, too, —

And longer fall the shadows of the hills.

Therefore, good-by; fare ye well, and sleep in quiet, both my sisters! Don't forget to write.

H. D. THOREAU.

POSTSCRIPT. (BY MRS. THOREAU.)

DEAR SOPHIA, — Sam Black [the cat] is liable to frequent attacks that impair his agility and good-nature; at such times he goes down cellar, and stays many hours. Your flowers — O, the cruel frost! — are all but

dead; the cactus is withered by cold, but the geraniums yet flourish. The Sewing Circle has been revived this winter; they meet at our house in April or May, so that you may then be here. Your Aunt Sophia remains with us, — when she will return to the city I don't know. We still suffer from heavy colds, but not so much. Young Miss E. White is staying in the village a little while (is making a little visit in town). Don't forget to write within two weeks. We expect a letter next Sunday.

That you may enjoy good health is the prayer of
Your mother,

C. THOREAU.

(H. D. T. was the scribe.)

Cats were always an important branch of the Thoreaus' domestic economy, and Henry was more tolerant of them than men are wont to be. Flowers were the specialty of Sophia, who, when I knew her, from 1855 to 1876, usually had a small conservatory in a recess of the dining-room. At this time (1840) she seems to have been aiding Helen in her school. The next letter, to Helen, is of a graver tone:—

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

CONCORD, June 13, 1840.

DEAR HELEN, — That letter to John, for which you had an opportunity doubtless to substitute a more perfect communication, fell, as was natural, into the hands of his "transcendental brother," who is his proxy in such cases, having been commissioned to acknowledge

and receipt all bills that may be presented. But what's in a name? Perhaps it does not matter whether it be John or Henry. Nor will those same six months have to be altered, I fear, to suit his case as well. But methinks they have not passed entirely without intercourse, provided we have been sincere though humble worshipers of the same virtue in the mean time. Certainly it is better that we should make ourselves quite sure of such a communion as this by the only course which is completely free from suspicion, — the coincidence of two earnest and aspiring lives, — than run the risk of a disappointment by relying wholly or chiefly on so meagre and uncertain a means as speech, whether written or spoken, affords. How often, when we have been nearest each other bodily, have we really been farthest off! Our tongues were the witty foils with which we fenced each other off. Not that we have not met heartily and with profit as members of one family, but it was a small one surely, and not that other human family. We have met frankly and without concealment ever, as befits those who have an instinctive trust in one another, and the scenery of whose outward lives has been the same, but never as prompted by an earnest and affectionate desire to probe deeper our mutual natures. Such intercourse, at least, if it has ever been, has not condescended to the vulgarities of oral communication, for the ears are provided with no lid as the eye is, and would not have been deaf to it in sleep. And now glad am I, if I am not mistaken in imagining that some such transcendental inquisitiveness has traveled post *thither*, — for, as I observed before, where the bolt

hits, thither was it aimed, — any arbitrary direction notwithstanding.

Thus much, at least, our *kindred* temperament of mind and body — and long *family*-arity — have done for us, that we already find ourselves standing on a solid and natural footing with respect to one another, and shall not have to waste time in the so often unavailing endeavor to arrive fairly at this simple ground.

Let us leave trifles, then, to accident ; and politics, and finance, and such gossip, to the moments when diet and exercise are cared for, and speak to each other deliberately as out of one infinity into another, — you there in time and space, and I here. For beside this relation, all books and doctrines are no better than gossip or the turning of a spit.

Equally to you and Sophia, from

Your affectionate brother,

H. D. THOREAU.

We come now to the period when Thoreau entered on more intimate relations with Emerson. There was a difference of fourteen years in their ages, which had hitherto separated them intellectually ; but now the young scholar, thinker, and naturalist had so fast advanced that he could meet his senior on more equal terms, and each became essential to the other. With all his prudence and common sense, in which he surpassed most men, Emerson was yet lacking in some practical faculties ; while Thoreau was the most practical and handy person in all matters of every-day life, — a good mechanic and gardener, methodical in his habits, obser-

vant and kindly in the domestic world, and attractive to children, who now were important members of the Emerson household. He was therefore invited by Emerson to make his house a home, — looking after the garden, the business affairs, and performing the office of a younger brother or a grown-up son. The invitation was accepted in April, 1841, and Thoreau remained in the family, with frequent absences, until he went in May, 1843, to reside with Mr. William Emerson, near New York, as the tutor of his sons. During these two years much occurred of deep moment to the two friends. Young Waldo Emerson, the beautiful boy, died, and just before, John Thoreau, the sunny and hopeful brother, whom Henry seems to have loved more than any human being. These tragedies brought the bereaved nearer together, and gave to Mrs. Emerson in particular an affection for Thoreau and a trust in him which made the intimate life of the household move harmoniously, notwithstanding the independent and eccentric genius of Thoreau.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN¹ (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, July 21, 1841.

DEAR FRIEND, — Don't think I need any prompting to write to you ; but what tough earthenware shall I put into my packet to travel over so many hills, and

¹ Mrs. Brown was the elder sister of Mrs. R. W. Emerson and of the eminent chemist and geologist, Dr. Charles T. Jackson, of Plymouth and Boston. She lived for a time in Mrs. Thoreau's family, and Thoreau's early verses, "Sic Vita," were thrown into her window there by the young poet, wrapped round a cluster of violets.

thrid so many woods, as lie between Concord and Plymouth? Thank fortune it is all the way down hill, so they will get safely carried ; and yet it seems as if it were writing against time and the sun to send a letter east, for no natural force forwards it. You should go dwell in the West, and then I would deluge you with letters, as boys throw feathers into the air to see the wind take them. I should rather fancy you at evening dwelling far away behind the serene curtain of the West, — the home of fair weather, — than over by the chilly sources of the east wind.

What quiet thoughts have you nowadays which will float on that east wind to west, for so we may make our worst servants our carriers, — what progress made from *can't* to *can*, in practice and theory? Under this category, you remember, we used to place all our philosophy. Do you have any still, startling, well moments, in which you think grandly, and speak with emphasis? Don't take this for sarcasm, for not in a year of the gods, I fear, will such a golden approach to plain speaking revolve again. But away with such fears; by a few miles of travel we have not distanced each other's sincerity.

I grow savager and savager every day, as if fed on raw meat, and my tameness is only the repose of untamableness. I dream of looking abroad summer and winter, with free gaze, from some mountain-side, while my eyes revolve in an Egyptian slime of health, — I to be nature looking into nature with such easy sympathy as the blue-eyed grass in the meadow looks in the face of the sky. From some such recess I would put forth

sublime thoughts daily, as the plant puts forth leaves. Now-a-nights I go on to the hill to see the sun set, as one would go home at evening; the bustle of the village has run on all day, and left me quite in the rear; but I see the sunset, and find that it can wait for my slow virtue.

But I forget that you think more of this human nature than of this nature I praise. Why won't you believe that mine is more human than any single man or woman can be? that in it, in the sunset there, are all the qualities that can adorn a household, and that sometimes, in a fluttering leaf, one may hear all your Christianity preached.

You see how unskillful a letter-writer I am, thus to have come to the end of my sheet when hardly arrived at the beginning of my story. I was going to be soberer, I assure you, but now have only room to add, that if the fates allot you a serene hour, don't fail to communicate some of its serenity to your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

No, no. Improve so rare a gift for yourself, and send me of your leisure.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, Wednesday evening,
September 8, [1841.]

DEAR FRIEND,—Your note came wafted to my hand like the first leaf of the fall on the September wind, and I put only another interpretation upon its lines than upon the veins of those which are soon to

be strewed around me. It is nothing but Indian summer here at present. I mean that any weather seems reserved expressly for our late purposes whenever we happen to be fulfilling them. I do not know what right I have to so much happiness, but rather hold it in reserve till the time of my desert.

What with the crickets and the crowing of cocks, and the lowing of kine, our Concord life is sonorous enough. Sometimes I hear the cock bestir himself on his perch under my feet, and crow shrilly before dawn; and I think I might have been born any year for all the phenomena I know. We count sixteen eggs daily now, when arithmetic will only fetch the hens up to thirteen; but the world is young, and we wait to see this eccentricity complete its period.

My verses on Friendship are already printed in the *Dial*; not expanded, but reduced to completeness by leaving out the long lines, which always have, or should have, a longer or at least another sense than short ones.

Just now I am in the mid-sea of verses, and they actually rustle around me as the leaves would round the head of Autumnus himself should he thrust it up through some vales which I know; but, alas! many of them are but crisped and yellow leaves like his, I fear, and will deserve no better fate than to make mould for new harvests. I see the stanzas rise around me, verse upon verse, far and near, like the mountains from Agiocochook, not all having a terrestrial existence as yet, even as some of them may be clouds; but I fancy I see the gleam of some Sebago Lake and Sil-

ver Cascade, at whose well I may drink one day. I am as unfit for any practical purpose — I mean for the furtherance of the world's ends — as gossamer for ship-timber; and I, who am going to be a pencil-maker to-morrow,¹ can sympathize with God Apollo, who served King Admetus for a while on earth. But I believe he found it for his advantage at last, — as I am sure I shall, though I shall hold the nobler part at least out of the service.

Don't attach any undue seriousness to this threnody, for I love my fate to the very core and rind, and could swallow it without paring it, I think. You ask if I have written any more poems? Excepting those which Vulcan is now forging, I have only discharged a few more bolts into the horizon, — in all, three hundred verses — and sent them, as I may say, over the mountains to Miss Fuller, who may have occasion to remember the old rhyme: —

“Three scipen gode
Comen mid than flode
Three hundred cnihten.”

But these are far more Vandalic than they. In this narrow sheet there is not room even for one thought to root itself. But you must consider this an odd leaf of a volume, and that volume

Your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

¹ This business of pencil-making had become the family breadwinner, and Henry Thoreau worked at it and kindred arts by intervals for the next twenty years.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, October 5, 1841.

DEAR FRIEND, — I send you Williams's¹ letter as the last remembrancer to one of those "whose acquaintance he had the pleasure to form while in Concord." It came quite unexpectedly to me, but I was very glad to receive it, though I hardly know whether my utmost sincerity and interest can inspire a sufficient answer to it. I should like to have you send it back by some convenient opportunity.

Pray let me know what you are thinking about any day, — what most nearly concerns you. Last winter, you know, you did more than your share of the talking, and I did not complain for want of an opportunity. Imagine your stove-door out of order, at least, and then while I am fixing it you will think of enough things to say.

What makes the value of your life at present? what dreams have you, and what realizations? You know there is a high table-land which not even the east wind reaches. Now can't we walk and chat upon its plane still, as if there were no lower latitudes? Surely our two destinies are topics interesting and grand enough for any occasion.

I hope you have many gleams of serenity and health, or, if your body will grant you no positive respite, that you may, at any rate, enjoy your sickness occasionally, as much as I used to tell of. But here is the bundle going to be done up, so accept a "good-night" from

HENRY D. THOREAU.

¹ I. T. Williams, who had lived in Concord, but now wrote from Buffalo, N. Y.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, March 2, 1842.

DEAR FRIEND, — I believe I have nothing new to tell you, for what was news you have learned from other sources. I am much the same person that I was, who should be so much better; yet when I realize what has transpired, and the greatness of the part I am unconsciously acting, I am thrilled, and it seems as if there were none in history to match it.

Soon after John's death I listened to a music-box, and if, at any time, that event had seemed inconsistent with the beauty and harmony of the universe, it was then gently constrained into the placid course of nature by those steady notes, in mild and unoffended tone echoing far and wide under the heavens. But I find these things more strange than sad to me. What right have I to grieve, who have not ceased to wonder? We feel at first as if some opportunities of kindness and sympathy were lost, but learn afterward that any *pure grief* is ample recompense for all. That is, if we are faithful; for a great grief is but sympathy with the soul that disposes events, and is as natural as the resin on Arabian trees. Only Nature has a right to grieve perpetually, for she only is innocent. Soon the ice will melt, and the blackbirds sing along the river which he frequented, as pleasantly as ever. The same everlasting serenity will appear in this face of God, and we will not be sorrowful if he is not.

We are made happy when reason can discover no occasion for it. The memory of some past moments is more persuasive than the experience of present ones.

There have been visions of such breadth and brightness that these motes were invisible in their light.

I do not wish to see John ever again, — I mean him who is dead, — but that other, whom only he would have wished to see, or to be, of whom he was the imperfect representative. For we are not what we are, nor do we treat or esteem each other for such, but for what we are capable of being.

As for Waldo, he died as the mist rises from the brook, which the sun will soon dart his rays through. Do not the flowers die every autumn? He had not even taken root here. I was not startled to hear that he was dead; it seemed the most natural event that could happen. His fine organization demanded it, and nature gently yielded its request. It would have been strange if he had lived. Neither will nature manifest any sorrow at his death, but soon the note of the lark will be heard down in the meadow, and fresh dandelions will spring from the old stocks where he plucked them last summer.

I have been living ill of late, but am now doing better. How do you live in that Plymouth world, nowadays? ¹

¹ Mrs. Brown, to whom this letter and several others of the years 1841–43 were written, lived by turns in Plymouth, her native place, and in Concord, where she often visited Mrs. Emerson at the time when Thoreau was an inmate of the Emerson household. In the early part of 1843 she was in Plymouth, and her sister was sending her newspapers and other things, from time to time. The incident of the music-box, mentioned above, occurred at the Old Manse, where Hawthorne was living from the summer of 1842 until the spring of 1845, and was often visited by Thoreau and Ellery Channing. In the letter following, this incident is recalled, and with it the agreeable

Please remember me to Mary Russell. You must not blame me if I do *talk to the clouds*, for I remain

Your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, January 24, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — The other day I wrote you a letter to go in Mrs. Emerson's bundle, but, as it seemed unworthy, I did not send it, and now, to atone for that, I am going to send this, whether it be worthy or not. I will not venture upon news, for, as all the household are gone to bed, I cannot learn what has been told you. Do you read any noble verses nowadays? or do not verses still seem noble? For my own part, they have been the only things I remembered, or that which occasioned them, when all things else were blurred and defaced. All things have put on mourning but they; for the elegy itself is some victorious melody or joy escaping from the wreck.

It is a relief to read some true book, wherein all are equally dead, — equally alive. I think the best parts of Shakespeare would only be enchanced by the most

gift by Richard Fuller (a younger brother of Margaret Fuller and of Ellen, the wife of Ellery Channing, who came to reside in Concord about these years, and soon became Thoreau's most intimate friend), which was a music-box for the Thoreaus. They were all fond of music, and enjoyed it even in this mechanical form, — one evidence of the simple conditions of life in Concord then. The note of thanks to young Fuller, who had been, perhaps, a pupil of Thoreau, follows this letter to Mrs. Brown, though earlier in date. Mary Russell afterwards became Mrs. Marston Watson.

thrilling and affecting events. I have found it so. And so much the more, as they are not intended for consolation.

Do you think of coming to Concord again? I shall be glad to see you. I should be glad to know that I could see you when I would.

We always seem to be living just on the brink of a pure and lofty intercourse, which would make the ills and trivialness of life ridiculous. After each little interval, though it be but for the night, we are prepared to meet each other as gods and goddesses.

I seem to have dodged all my days with one or two persons, and lived upon expectation, — as if the bud would surely blossom; and so I am content to live.

What means the fact — which is so common, so universal — that some soul that has lost all hope for itself can inspire in another listening soul an infinite confidence in it, even while it is expressing its despair?

I am very happy in my present environment, though actually mean enough myself, and so, of course, all around me; yet, I am sure, we for the most part are transfigured to one another, and are that to the other which we aspire to be ourselves. The longest course of mean and trivial intercourse may not prevent my practicing this divine courtesy to my companion. Notwithstanding all I hear about brooms, and scouring, and taxes, and housekeeping, I am constrained to live a strangely mixed life, — as if even Valhalla might have its kitchen. We are all of us Apollos serving some Admetus.

I think I must have some Muses in my pay that I

know not of, for certain musical wishes of mine are answered as soon as entertained. Last summer I went to Hawthorne's suddenly for the express purpose of borrowing his music-box, and almost immediately Mrs. Hawthorne proposed to lend it to me. The other day I said I must go to Mrs. Barrett's to hear hers, and lo! straightway Richard Fuller sent me one for a present from Cambridge. It is a very good one. I should like to have you hear it. I shall not have to employ you to borrow for me now. Good-night.

From your affectionate friend,

H. D. T.

TO RICHARD F. FULLER (AT CAMBRIDGE).

CONCORD, January 16, 1843.

DEAR RICHARD, — I need not thank you for your present, for I hear its music, which seems to be playing just for us two pilgrims marching over hill and dale of a summer afternoon, up those long Bolton hills and by those bright Harvard lakes, such as I see in the placid Lucerne on the lid; and whenever I hear it, it will recall happy hours passed with its donor.

When did mankind make that foray into nature and bring off this booty? For certainly it is but history that some rare virtue in remote times plundered these strains from above and communicated them to men. Whatever we may think of it, it is a part of the harmony of the spheres you have sent me; which has condescended to serve us Admetuses, and I hope I may so behave that this may always be the tenor of your thought for me.

If you have any strains, the conquest of your own

spear or quill, to accompany these, let the winds waft them also to me.

I write this with one of the "primaries" of my osprey's wings, which I have preserved over my glass for some state occasion, and now it offers.

Mrs. Emerson sends her love.

TO MRS. LUCY BROWN (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, Friday evening,
January 25, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — Mrs. Emerson asks me to write you a letter, which she will put into her bundle to-morrow along with the "Tribunes" and "Standards," and miscellanies, and what not, to make an assortment. But what shall I write? You live a good way off, and I don't know that I have anything which will bear sending so far. But I am mistaken, or rather impatient when I say this, — for we all have a gift to send, not only when the year begins, but as long as interest and memory last. I don't know whether you have got the many I have sent you, or rather whether you were quite sure where they came from. I mean the letters I have sometimes launched off eastward in my thought; but if you have been happier at one time than another, think that then you received them. But this that I now send you is of another sort. It will go slowly, drawn by horses over muddy roads, and lose much of its little value by the way. You may have to pay for it, and it may not make you happy after all. But what shall be my new-year's gift, then? Why, I will send you my still fresh remembrance of the hours I have passed with

you here, for I find in the remembrance of them the best gift you have left to me. We are poor and sick creatures at best; but we can have well memories, and sound and healthy thoughts of one another still, and an intercourse may be remembered which was without blur, and above us both.

Perhaps you may like to know of my estate nowadays. As usual, I find it harder to account for the happiness I enjoy, than for the sadness which instructs me occasionally. If the little of this last which visits me would only be sadder, it would be happier. One while I am vexed by a sense of meanness; one while I simply wonder at the mystery of life; and at another, and at another, seem to rest on my oars, as if propelled by propitious breezes from I know not what quarter. But for the most part I am an idle, inefficient, lingering (one term will do as well as another, where all are true and none true enough) member of the great commonwealth, who have most need of my own charity, — if I could not be charitable and indulgent to myself, perhaps as good a subject for my own satire as any. You see how, when I come to talk of myself, I soon run dry, for I would fain make that a subject which can be no subject for me, at least not till I have the grace to rule myself.

I do not venture to say anything about your griefs, for it would be unnatural for me to speak as if I grieved with you, when I think I do not. If I were to see you, it might be otherwise. But I know you will pardon the trivialness of this letter; and I only hope — as I know that you have reason to be so — that you are still hap-

pier than you are sad, and that you remember that the smallest seed of faith is of more worth than the largest fruit of happiness. I have no doubt that out of S——'s death you sometimes draw sweet consolation, not only for that, but for long-standing griefs, and may find some things made smooth by it, which before were rough.

I wish you would communicate with me, and not think me unworthy to know any of your thoughts. Don't think me unkind because I have not written to you. I confess it was for so poor a reason as that you almost made a principle of not answering. I could not speak truly with this ugly fact in the way; and perhaps I wished to be assured, by such evidence as you could not voluntarily give, that it was a kindness. For every glance at the moon, does she not send me an answering ray? Noah would hardly have done himself the pleasure to release his dove, if she had not been about to come back to him with tidings of green islands amid the waste.

But these are far-fetched reasons. I am not speaking directly enough to yourself now; so let me say *directly*

From your friend,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Exactly when correspondence began between Emerson and Thoreau is not now to be ascertained, since all the letters do not seem to have been preserved. Their acquaintance opened while Thoreau was in college, although Emerson may have seen the studious boy at the town school in Concord, or at the "Academy"

there, while fitting for college. But they only came to know each other as sharers of the same thoughts and aspirations in the autumn of 1837, when, on hearing a new lecture of Emerson's, Helen Thoreau said to Mrs. Brown, then living or visiting in the Thoreau family, "Henry has a thought very like that in his journal" (which he had newly begun to keep). Mrs. Brown desired to see the passage, and soon bore it to her sister, Mrs. Emerson, whose husband saw it, and asked Mrs. Brown to bring her young friend to see him. By 1838 their new relation of respect was established, and Emerson wrote to a correspondent, "I delight much in my young friend, who seems to have as free and erect a mind as any I have ever met." A year later (Aug. 9, 1839), he wrote to Carlyle, "I have a young poet in this village, named Thoreau, who writes the truest verses." Indeed, it was in the years 1839-40 that he seems to have written the poems by which he is best remembered. Thoreau told me in his last illness that he had written many verses and destroyed many, — this fact he then regretted, although he had done it at the instance of Emerson, who did not praise them. "But," said he, "they may have been better than we thought them, twenty years ago."

The earliest note which I find from Emerson to Thoreau bears no date, but must have been written before 1842, for at no later time could the persons named in it have visited Concord together. Most likely it was in the summer of 1840, and to the same date do I assign a note asking Henry to join the Emersons in a party to the Cliffs (*scopuli Pulchri-Portus*), and to

bring his flute,—for on that pastoral reed Thoreau played sweetly. The first series of letters from Thoreau to Emerson begins early in 1843, about the time the letters just given were written to Mrs. Brown. In the first he gives thanks to Emerson for the hospitality of his house in the two preceding years; a theme to which he returned a few months later,—for I doubt not the lovely sad poem called “The Departure” was written at Staten Island soon after his leaving the Emerson house in Concord for the more stately but less congenial residence of William Emerson at Staten Island, whither he betook himself in May, 1843. This first letter, however, was sent from the Concord home to Waldo Emerson at Staten Island, or perhaps in New York, where he was that winter giving a course of lectures.

In explanation of the passages concerning Bronson Alcott, in this letter, it should be said that he was then living at the Hosmer Cottage, in Concord, with his English friends, Charles Lane and Henry Wright, and that he had refused to pay a tax in support of what he considered an unjust government, and was arrested by the constable, Sam Staples, in consequence.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, January 24, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND,—The best way to correct a mistake is to make it right. I had not spoken of writing to you, but as you say you are about to write to me when you get my letter, I make haste on my part in order to get yours the sooner. I don't well know what to say to earn

the forthcoming epistle, unless that Edith takes rapid strides in the arts and sciences—or music and natural history—as well as over the carpet; that she says “papa” less and less abstractedly every day, looking in *my* face,—which may sound like a *Ranz des Vaches* to yourself. And Ellen declares every morning that “papa *may* come home to-night;” and by and by it will have changed to such positive statement as that “papa came home *larks* night.”

Elizabeth Hoar still flits about these clearings, and I meet her here and there, and in all houses but her own, but as if I were not the less of her family for all that. I have made slight acquaintance also with one Mrs. Lidian Emerson, who almost persuades me to be a Christian, but I fear I as often lapse into heathenism. Mr. O’Sullivan¹ was here three days. I met him at the Atheneum [Concord], and went to Hawthorne’s [at the Old Manse] to tea with him. He expressed a great deal of interest in your poems, and wished me to give him a list of them, which I did; he saying he did not know but he should notice them. He is a rather puny-looking man, and did not strike me. We had nothing to say to one another, and therefore we said a great deal! He, however, made a point of asking me to write for his Review, which I shall be glad to do. He is, at any rate, one of the not-bad, but does not by any means take you by storm,—no, nor by calm, which is the best way. He expects to see you in New York. After tea I carried him and Hawthorne to the Lyceum.

¹ Editor of the *Democratic Review*, for which Hawthorne, Emerson Thoreau, and Whittier all wrote, more or less.

Mr. Alcott has not altered much since you left. I think you will find him much the same sort of person. With Mr. Lane I have had one regular chat *à la* George Minott, which of course was greatly to our mutual grati- and edification; and, as two or three as regular conversations have taken place since, I fear there may have been a precession of the equinoxes. Mr. Wright, according to the last accounts, is in Lynn, with uncertain aims and prospects, — maturing slowly, perhaps, as indeed are all of us. I suppose they have told you how near Mr. Alcott went to the jail, but I can add a good anecdote to the rest. When Staples came to collect Mrs. Ward's taxes, my sister Helen asked him what he thought Mr. Alcott meant, — what his idea was, — and he answered, "I vum, I believe it was nothing but principle, for I never heerd a man talk honester."

There was a lecture on Peace by a Mr. Spear (ought he not to be beaten into a plowshare?), the same evening, and, as the gentlemen, Lane and Alcott, dined at our house while the matter was in suspense, — that is, while the constable was waiting for his receipt from the jailer, — we there settled it that we, that is, Lane and myself, perhaps, should agitate the State while Winkelried lay in durance. But when, over the audience, I saw our hero's head moving in the free air of the Universalist church, my fire all went out, and the State was safe as far as I was concerned. But Lane, it seems, had cogitated and even written on the matter, in the afternoon, and so, out of courtesy, taking his point of departure from the Spear-man's lecture, he drove

gracefully *in medias res*, and gave the affair a very good setting out; but, to spoil all, our martyr very characteristically, but, as artists would say, in bad taste, brought up the rear with a "My Prisons," which made us forget Silvio Pellico himself.

Mr. Lane wishes me to ask you to see if there is anything for him in the New York office, and pay the charges. Will you tell me what to do with Mr. [Theodore] Parker, who was to lecture February 15th? Mrs. Emerson says my letter is written instead of one from her.

At the end of this strange letter I will not write — what alone I had to say — to thank you and Mrs. Emerson for your long kindness to me. It would be more ungrateful than my constant thought. I have been your pensioner for nearly two years, and still left free as under the sky. It has been as free a gift as the sun or the summer, though I have sometimes molested you with my mean acceptance of it, — I who have failed to render even those slight services of the *hand* which would have been for a sign at least; and, by the fault of my nature, have failed of many better and higher services. But I will not trouble you with this, but for once thank you as well as Heaven.

Your friend,

H. D. T.

Mrs. Lidian Emerson, the wife of R. W. Emerson, and her two daughters, Ellen and Edith, are named in this first letter, and will be frequently mentioned in the correspondence. At this date, Edith, now Mrs. W. H. Forbes, was fourteen months old. Mr. Emerson's mo-

ther, Madam Ruth Emerson, was also one of the household, which had for a little more than seven years occupied the well-known house under the trees, east of the village.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, February 10, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have stolen one of your own sheets to write you a letter upon, and I hope, with two layers of ink, to turn it into a comforter. If you like to receive a letter from me, too, I am glad, for it gives me pleasure to write. But don't let it come amiss; it must fall as harmlessly as leaves settle on the landscape. I will tell you what we are doing this now. Supper is done, and Edith — the dessert, perhaps more than the dessert — is brought in, or even comes in *per se*; and round she goes, now to this altar, and then to that, with her monosyllabic invocation of "oc," "oc." It makes me think of "Langue d'oc." She must belong to that province. And like the gypsies she talks a language of her own while she understands ours. While she jabbars Sanskrit, Parsee, Pehlvi, say "Edith go bah!" and "bah" it is. No intelligence passes between us. She knows. It is a capital joke, — that is the reason she smiles so. How well the secret is kept! she never descends to explanation. It is not buried liked a common secret, bolstered up on two sides, but by an eternal silence on the one side, at least. It has been long kept, and comes in from the unexplored horizon, like a blue mountain range, to end abruptly at our door one day. (Don't stumble at this steep simile.)

And now she studies the heights and depths of nature

On shoulders whirled in some eccentric orbit
Just by old Pæstum's temples and the perch
Where Time doth plume his wings.

And now she runs the race over the carpet, while all Olympia applauds, — mamma, grandma, and uncle, good Grecians all, — and that dark-hued barbarian, Partheanna Parker, whose shafts go through and through, not backward! Grandmamma smiles over all, and mamma is wondering what papa would say, should she descend on Carlton House some day. "Larks night" 's abed, dreaming of "pleased faces" far away. But now the trumpet sounds, the games are over; some Hebe comes, and Edith is translated. I don't know where; it must be to some cloud, for I never was there.

Query: what becomes of the answers Edith thinks, but cannot express? She really gives you glances which are before this world was. You can't feel any difference of age, except that you have longer legs and arms.

Mrs. Emerson said I must tell you about domestic affairs, when I mentioned that I was going to write. Perhaps it will inform you of the state of all if I only say that I am well and happy in your house here in Concord.

Your friend,

HENRY.

Don't forget to tell us what to do with Mr. Parker when you write next. I lectured this week. It was as bright a night as you could wish. I hope there were no stars thrown away on the occasion.

[A part of the same letter, though bearing a date two days later, and written in a wholly different style, as from one sage to another, is this postscript :]

February 12, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — As the packet still tarries, I will send you some thoughts, which I have lately relearned, as the latest public and private news.

How mean are our relations to one another! Let us pause till they are nobler. A little silence, a little rest, is good. It would be sufficient employment only to cultivate true ones.

The richest gifts we can bestow are the least marketable. We hate the kindness which we understand. A noble person confers no such gift as his whole confidence: none so exalts the giver and the receiver; it produces the truest gratitude. Perhaps it is only essential to friendship that some vital trust should have been reposed by the one in the other. I feel addressed and probed even to the remote parts of my being when one nobly shows, even in trivial things, an implicit faith in me. When such divine commodities are so near and cheap, how strange that it should have to be each day's discovery! A threat or a curse may be forgotten, but this mild trust translates me. I am no more of this earth; it acts dynamically; it changes my very substance. I cannot do what before I did. I cannot be what before I was. Other chains may be broken, but in the darkest night, in the remotest place, I trail this thread. Then things cannot *happen*. What if God were to confide in us for a moment! Should we not then be gods?

How subtle a thing is this confidence! Nothing sensible passes between; never any consequences are to be apprehended should it be misplaced. Yet something has transpired. A new behavior springs; the ship carries new ballast in her hold. A sufficiently great and generous trust could never be abused. It should be cause to lay down one's life, — which would not be to lose it. Can there be any mistake up there? Don't the gods know where to invest their wealth? Such confidence, too, would be reciprocal. When one confides greatly in you, he will feel the roots of an equal trust fastening themselves in him. When such trust has been received or reposed, we dare not speak, hardly to see each other; our voices sound harsh and untrustworthy. We are as instruments which the Powers have dealt with. Through what straits would we not carry this little burden of a magnanimous trust! Yet no harm could possibly come, but simply faithlessness. Not a feather, not a straw, is intrusted; that packet is empty. It is only *committed* to us, and, as it were, all things are committed to us.

The kindness I have longest remembered has been of this sort, — the sort unsaid; so far behind the speaker's lips that almost it already lay in my heart. It did not have far to go to be communicated. The gods cannot misunderstand, man cannot explain. We communicate like the burrows of foxes, in silence and darkness, under ground. We are undermined by faith and love. How much more full is Nature where we think the empty space is than where we place the solids! — full of fluid influences. Should we ever communicate but by these? The spirit abhors a vacuum more than Nature. There

is a tide which pierces the pores of the air. These aerial rivers, let us not pollute their currents. What meadows do they course through? How many fine mails there are which traverse their routes! He is privileged who gets his letter franked by them.

I believe these things.

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Emerson replied to these letters in two epistles of dates from February 4 to 12, 1843, — in the latter asking Thoreau to aid him in editing the April number of the *Dial* of which he had taken charge. Among other things, Emerson desired a manuscript of Charles Lane, Alcott's English friend, to be sent to him in New York, where he was detained several weeks by his lectures. He added: "Have we no news from Wheeler? Has Bartlett none?" Of these persons, the first, Charles Stearns Wheeler, a college classmate of Thoreau, and later Greek tutor in the college, had gone to Germany, — where he died the next summer, — and was contributing to the quarterly *Dial*. Robert Bartlett, of Plymouth, a townsman of Mrs. Emerson, was Wheeler's intimate friend, with whom he corresponded.¹ To this

¹ An interesting fact in connection with Thoreau and Wheeler (whose home was in Lincoln, four miles southeast of Concord) is related by Ellery Channing in a note to me. It seems that Wheeler had built for himself, or hired from a farmer, a rough woodland study near Flint's Pond, half-way from Lincoln to Concord, which he occupied for a short time in 1841-42, and where Thoreau and Channing visited him. Mr. Channing wrote me in 1883: "Stearns Wheeler built a 'shanty' on Flint's Pond for the purpose of economy, for purchasing Greek books and going abroad to study. Whether Mr. Thoreau

editorial request Thoreau, who was punctuality itself, replied at once.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, February 15, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I got your letters, one yesterday and the other to-day, and they have made me quite happy. As a packet is to go in the morning, I will give you a hasty account of the *Dial*. I called on Mr. Lane this afternoon, and brought away, together with an abundance of good-will, first, a bulky catalogue of books without commentary, — some eight hundred, I think he told me, with an introduction filling one sheet,

assisted him to build this shanty I cannot say, but I think he may have ; also that he spent six weeks with him there. As Mr. Thoreau was not too original and inventive to follow the example of others, if good to him, it is very probable this undertaking of Stearns Wheeler, whom he regarded (as I think I have heard him say) a heroic character, suggested his own experiment on Walden. I believe I visited this shanty with Mr. Thoreau. It was very plain, with bunks of straw, and built in the Irish manner. I think Mr. Wheeler was as good a mechanic as Mr. Thoreau, and built this shanty for his own use. The object of these two experiments was quite unlike, except in the common purpose of economy. It seems to me highly probable that Mr. Wheeler's experiment suggested Mr. Thoreau's, as he was a man he almost worshiped. But I could not understand what relation Mr. Lowell had to this fact, if it be one. Students, in all parts of the earth, have pursued a similar course from motives of economy, and to carry out some special study. Mr. Thoreau wished to study birds, flowers, and the stone age, just as Mr. Wheeler wished to study Greek. And Mr. Hotham came next from just the same motive of economy (necessity) and to study the Bible. The prudential sides of all three were the same." Mr. Hotham was the young theological student who dwelt in a cabin by Walden in 1869-70.

— ten or a dozen pages, say, though I have only glanced at them; second, a review — twenty-five or thirty printed pages — of *Conversations on the Gospels*, *Record of a School*, and *Spiritual Culture*, with rather copious extracts. However, it is a good subject, and Lane says it gives him satisfaction. I will give it a faithful reading directly. [These were Alcott's publications, reviewed by Lane.] And now I come to the little end of the horn; for myself, I have brought along the *Minor Greek Poets*, and will mine there for a scrap or two, at least. As for Etzler, I don't remember any "rude and snappish speech" that you made, and if you did it must have been longer than anything I had written; however, here is the book still, and I will try. Perhaps I have some few scraps in my *Journal* which you may choose to print. The translation of the *Æschylus* I should like very well to continue anon, if it should be worth the while. As for poetry, I have not remembered to write any for some time; it has quite slipped my mind; but sometimes I think I hear the mutterings of the thunder. Don't you remember that last summer we heard a low, tremulous sound in the woods and over the hills, and thought it was partridges or rocks, and it proved to be thunder gone down the river? But sometimes it was over Wayland way, and at last burst over our heads. So we'll not despair by reason of the drought. You see it takes a good many words to supply the place of one deed; a hundred lines to a cobweb, and but one cable to a man-of-war. The *Dial* case needs to be reformed in many particulars. There is no news from Wheeler, none from Bartlett.

They all look well and happy in this house, where it gives me much pleasure to dwell.

Yours in haste,

HENRY.

P. S.

Wednesday evening, February 16.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have time to write a few words about the *Dial*. I have just received the three first signatures, which do not yet complete Lane's piece. He will place five hundred copies for sale at Munroe's bookstore. Wheeler has sent you two full sheets — more about the German universities — and proper names, which will have to be printed in alphabetical order for convenience; what this one has done, that one is doing, and the other intends to do. Hammer-Purgstall (Von Hammer) may be one, for aught I know. However, there are two or three *things* in it, as well as names. One of the books of Herodotus is discovered to be out of place. He says something about having sent Lowell, by the last steamer, a budget of literary news, which he will have communicated to you ere this. Mr. Alcott has a letter from Heraud,¹ and a book written by him, — the Life of Savonarola, — which he wishes to have republished here. Mr. Lane will write a notice of it. (The latter says that what is in the New York post-office *may* be directed to Mr. Alcott.) Miss [Elizabeth] Peabody has sent a "Notice to the readers of the *Dial*," which is not good.

Mr. Chapin lectured this evening, and so rhetorically that I forgot my duty and heard very little. I find my-

¹ An English critic and poetaster. See *Memoir of Bronson Alcott*, pp. 292-318.

self better than I have been, and am meditating some other method of paying debts than by lectures and writing, — which will only do to talk about. If anything of that “other” sort should come to your ears in New York, will you remember it for me?

Excuse this scrawl, which I have written over the embers in the dining-room. I hope that you live on good terms with yourself and the gods.

Yours in haste,

HENRY.

Mr. Lane and his lucubrations proved to be tough subjects, and the next letter has more to say about them and the *Dial*. Lane had undertaken to do justice to Mr. Alcott and his books, as may still be read in the pages of that April number of the Transcendentalist quarterly.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, February 20, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I have read Mr. Lane’s review, and *can* say, speaking for this world and for fallen man, that “it is good for us.” As they say in geology, time never fails, there is always enough of it, so I may say, criticism never fails; but if I go and read elsewhere, I say it is good, — far better than any notice Mr. Alcott has received, or is likely to receive from another quarter. It is at any rate “the other side” which Boston needs to hear. I do not send it to you, because time is precious, and because I think you would accept it, after all. After speaking briefly of the fate of Goethe and Carlyle in their own countries, he says, “To

Emerson in his own circle is but slowly accorded a worthy response; and Alcott, almost utterly neglected," etc. I will strike out what relates to yourself, and correcting some verbal faults, send the rest to the printer with Lane's initials.

The catalogue needs amendment, I think. It wants completeness now. It should consist of such books only as they would tell Mr. [F. H.] Hedge and [Theodore] Parker they had got; omitting the Bible, the classics, and much besides,—for there the incompleteness begins. But you will be here in season for this.

It is frequently easy to make Mr. Lane more universal and attractive; to write, for instance, "universal ends" instead of "the universal end," just as we pull open the petals of a flower with our fingers where they are confined by its own sweets. Also he had better not say "books designed for the nucleus of a *Home University*," until he makes that word "home" ring solid and universal too. This is that abominable dialect. He had just given me a notice of George Bradford's *Fénelon* for the *Record of the Months*, and speaks of extras of the *Review and Catalogue*, if they are printed,—even a hundred, or thereabouts. How shall this be arranged? Also he wishes to use some manuscripts of his which are in your possession, if you do not. Can I get them?

I think of no news to tell you. It is a serene summer day here, all above the snow. The hens steal their nests, and I steal their eggs still, as formerly. This is what I do with the hands. Ah, labor,—it is a divine institution, and conversation with many men and hens.

Do not think that my letters require as many special

answers. I get one as often as you write to Concord. Concord inquires for you daily, as do all the members of this house. You must make haste home before we have settled all the great questions, for they are fast being disposed of. But I must leave room for Mrs. Emerson.

Mrs. Emerson's letter, after speaking of other matters, gave a lively sketch of Thoreau at one of Alcott's Conversations in her house, which may be quoted as illustrating the young Nature-worshiper's position at the time, and the more humane and socialistic spirit of Alcott and Lane, who were soon to leave Concord for their experiment of communistic life at "Fruitlands," in the rural town of Harvard.

"Last evening we had the 'Conversation,' though, owing to the bad weather, but few attended. The subjects were: What is Prophecy? Who is a Prophet? and The Love of Nature. Mr. Lane decided, as for all time and the race, that this same love of nature — of which Henry [Thoreau] was the champion, and Elizabeth Hoar and Lidian (though L. disclaimed possessing it herself) his faithful squires — that this love was the most subtle and dangerous of sins; a refined idolatry, much more to be dreaded than gross wickednesses, because the gross sinner would be alarmed by the depth of his degradation, and come up from it in terror, but the unhappy idolaters of Nature were deceived by the refined quality of their sin, and would be the last to enter the kingdom. Henry frankly affirmed to both the wise men that they were wholly deficient in

the faculty in question, and therefore could not judge of it. And Mr. Alcott as frankly answered that it was because they went beyond the mere material objects, and were filled with spiritual love and perception (as Mr. T. was not), that they seemed to Mr. Thoreau not to appreciate outward nature. I am very heavy, and have spoiled a most excellent story. I have given you no idea of the scene, which was ineffably comic, though it made no laugh at the time; I scarcely laughed at it myself, — too deeply amused to give the usual sign. Henry was brave and noble; well as I have always liked him, he still grows upon me.”

Before going to Staten Island in May, 1843, Thoreau answered a letter from the same Richard Fuller who had made him the musical gift in the previous winter. He was at Harvard College, and desired to know something of Thoreau's pursuits there, — concerning which Channing says in his *Life*,¹ “He was a respectable student, having done there a bold reading in English poetry, — even to some portions or the whole of Davenant's ‘Gondibert.’” This, Thoreau does not mention in his letter, but it was one of the things that attracted Emerson's notice, since he also had the same taste for the Elizabethan and Jacobean English poets. An English youth, Henry Headley, pupil of Dr. Parr, and graduate of Oxford in 1786, had preceded Thoreau in

¹ *Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist*. With Memorial Verses. By William Ellery Channing, New Edition, enlarged, edited by F. B. Sanborn (Boston: Charles Goodspeed, 1902). This volume, in some respects the best biography of Thoreau, is no longer rare. Among the Verses are those written by Channing for his friend's funeral; at which, also, Mr. Alcott read Thoreau's poem of Sympathy.

this study of poets that had become obsolete; and it was perhaps Headley's volume, "Select Beauties of Ancient English Poetry, with Remarks by the late Henry Headley," published long after his death,¹ that served Thoreau as a guide to Quarles and the Fletchers, Daniel, Drummond, Drayton, Habington, and Raleigh, — poets that few Americans had heard of in 1833.

TO RICHARD F. FULLER (AT CAMBRIDGE).

CONCORD, April 2, 1843.

DEAR RICHARD, — I was glad to receive a letter from you so bright and cheery. You speak of not having made any conquests with your own spear or quill as yet; but if you are tempering your spear-head during these days, and fitting a straight and tough shaft thereto, will not that suffice? We are more pleased to consider the hero in the forest cutting cornel or ash for his spear, than marching in triumph with his trophies. The present hour is always wealthiest when it is poorer than the future ones, as that is the pleasantest site which affords the pleasantest prospects.

What you say about your studies furnishing you with a "mimic idiom" only, reminds me that we shall all do well if we learn so much as to talk, — to speak truth. The only fruit which even much living yields seems to be often only some trivial success, — the ability to do some slight thing better. We make conquest only of

¹ Headley died at the age of twenty-three, in 1788. His posthumous book was edited in 1810 by Rev. Henry Kett, and published in London by John Sharp.

husks and shells for the most part, — at least apparently, — but sometimes these are cinnamon and spices, you know. Even the grown hunter you speak of slays a thousand buffaloes, and brings off only their hides and tongues. What immense sacrifices, what hecatombs and holocausts, the gods exact for very slight favors! How much sincere life before we can even utter one sincere word.

What I was learning in college was chiefly, I think, to express myself, and I see now, that as the old orator prescribed, 1st, action; 2d, action; 3d, action; my teachers should have prescribed to me, 1st, sincerity; 2d, sincerity; 3d, sincerity. The old mythology is incomplete without a god or goddess of sincerity, on whose altars we might offer up all the products of our farms, our workshops, and our studies. It should be our Lar when we sit on the hearth, and our Tutelar Genius when we walk abroad. This is the only panacea. I mean sincerity in our dealings with ourselves mainly; any other is comparatively easy. But I must stop before I get to 17thly. I believe I have but one text and one sermon.

Your rural adventures beyond the West Cambridge hills have probably lost nothing by distance of time or space. I used to hear only the sough of the wind in the woods of Concord, when I was striving to give my attention to a page of calculus. But, depend upon it, you will love your native hills the better for being separated from them.

I expect to leave Concord, which is my Rome, and its people, who are my Romans, in May, and go to

New York, to be a tutor in Mr. William Emerson's family. So I will bid you good-by till I see you or hear from you again.

Going to Staten Island, early in May, 1843, Thoreau's first care was to write to his "Romans, countrymen, and lovers by the banks of the Musketaquid,"—beginning with his mother, his sisters, and Mrs. Emerson. To Sophia and Mrs. E. he wrote May 22, — to Helen, with a few touching verses on his brother John, the next day; and then he resumed the correspondence with Emerson. It seems that one of his errands near New York was to make the acquaintance of literary men and journalists in the city, in order to find a vehicle for publication, such as his neighbor Hawthorne had finally found in the pages of the *Democratic Review*. For this purpose Thoreau made himself known to Henry James, and other friends of Emerson, and to Horace Greeley, then in the first freshness of his success with the *Tribune*,—a newspaper hardly more than two years old then, but destined to a great career, in which several of the early Transcendentalists took some part.

TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, STATEN ISLAND, May 11, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER AND FRIENDS AT HOME, — We arrived here safely at ten o'clock on Sunday morning, having had as good a passage as usual, though we ran aground and were detained a couple of hours in the Thames River, till the tide came to our relief. At length we curtsied up to a wharf just the other side of their Castle Garden,

—very incurious about them and their city. I believe my vacant looks, absolutely inaccessible to questions, did at length satisfy an army of starving cabmen that I did not want a hack, cab, or anything of that sort as yet. It was the only demand the city made on us; as if a wheeled vehicle of some sort were the sum and summit of a reasonable man's wants. "Having tried the water," they seemed to say, "will you not return to the pleasant securities of land carriage? Else why your boat's prow turned toward the shore at last?" They are a sad-looking set of fellows, not permitted to come on board, and I pitied them. They had been expecting me, it would seem, and did really wish that I should take a cab; though they did not seem rich enough to supply me with one.

It was a confused jumble of heads and soiled coats, dangling from flesh-colored faces, — all swaying to and fro, as by a sort of undertow, while each whipstick, true as the needle to the pole, still preserved that level and direction in which its proprietor had dismissed his forlorn interrogatory. They took sight from them, — the lash being wound up thereon, to prevent your attention from wandering, or to make it concentrate upon its object by the spiral line. They began at first, perhaps, with the modest, but rather confident inquiry, "Want a cab, sir?" but as their despair increased, it took the affirmative tone, as the disheartened and irresolute are apt to do: "You want a cab, sir," or even, "You want a nice cab, sir, to take you to Fourth Street." The question which one had bravely and hopefully begun to put, another had the tact to take up and conclude with

fresh emphasis, — twirling it from his particular whipstick as if it had emanated from his lips, — as the sentiment did from his heart. Each one could truly say, “Them’s my sentiments.” But it was a sad sight.

I am seven and a half miles from New York, and, as it would take half a day at least, have not been there yet. I have already run over no small part of the island, to the highest hill, and some way along the shore. From the hill directly behind the house I can see New York, Brooklyn, Long Island, the Narrows, through which vessels bound to and from all parts of the world chiefly pass, — Sandy Hook and the Highlands of Neversink (part of the coast of New Jersey), — and, by going still farther up the hill, the Kill van Kull, and Newark Bay. From the pinnacle of one Madame Grimes’s house, the other night at sunset, I could see almost round the island. Far in the horizon there was a fleet of sloops bound up the Hudson, which seemed to be going over the edge of the earth; and in view of these trading ships commerce seems quite imposing.

But it is rather derogatory that your dwelling-place should be only a neighborhood to a great city, — to live on an inclined plane. I do not like their cities and forts, with their morning and evening guns, and sails flapping in one’s eye. I want a whole continent to breathe in, and a good deal of solitude and silence, such as all Wall Street cannot buy, — nor Broadway with its wooden pavement. I must live along the beach, on the southern shore, which looks directly out to sea, — and see what that great parade of water means, that dashes and roars, and has not yet wet me, as long as I have lived.

I must not know anything about my condition and relations here till what is not permanent is worn off. I have not yet subsided. Give me time enough, and I may like it. All my inner man heretofore has been a Concord impression; and here come these Sandy Hook and Coney Island breakers to meet and modify the former; but it will be long before I can make nature look as innocently grand and inspiring as in Concord.

Your affectionate son,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, STATEN ISLAND, May 22, 1843.

DEAR SOPHIA, — I have had a severe cold ever since I came here, and have been confined to the house for the last week with bronchitis, though I am now getting out, so I have not seen much in the botanical way. The cedar seems to be one of the most common trees here, and the fields are very fragrant with it. There are also the gum and tulip trees. The latter is not very common, but is very large and beautiful, having flowers as large as tulips, and as handsome. It is not time for it yet.

The woods are now full of a large honeysuckle in full bloom, which differs from ours in being red instead of white, so that at first I did not know its genus. The painted-cup is very common in the meadows here. Peaches, and especially cherries, seem to grow by all the fences. Things are very forward here compared with Concord. The apricots growing out-of-doors are already as large as plums. The apple, pear, peach, cherry, and plum trees have shed their blossoms. The

whole island is like a garden, and affords very fine scenery.

In front of the house is a very extensive wood, beyond which is the sea, whose roar I can hear all night long, when there is a wind; if easterly winds have prevailed on the Atlantic. There are always some vessels in sight, — ten, twenty, or thirty miles off, — and Sunday before last there were hundreds in long procession, stretching from New York to Sandy Hook, and far beyond, for Sunday is a lucky day.

I went to New York Saturday before last. A walk of half an hour, by half a dozen houses, along the Richmond road — that is the road that leads to Richmond, on which we live — brings me to the village of Stapleton, in Southfield, where is the lower dock; but if I prefer I can walk along the shore three quarters of a mile farther toward New York to the quarantine village of Castleton, to the upper dock, which the boat leaves five or six times every day, a quarter of an hour later than the former place. Farther on is the village of New Brighton, and farther still Port Richmond, which villages another steamboat visits.

In New York I saw George Ward, and also Giles Waldo and William Tappan, whom I can describe better when I have seen them more. They are young friends of Mr. Emerson. Waldo came down to the island to see me the next day. I also saw the Great Western, the Croton water-works, and the picture-gallery of the National Academy of Design. But I have not had time to see or do much yet.

Tell Miss Ward I shall try to put my microscope to a

good use, and if I find any new and preservable flower, will throw it into my commonplace-book. Garlic, the original of the common onion, grows here all over the fields, and during its season spoils the cream and butter for the market, as the cows like it very much.

Tell Helen there are two schools of late established in the neighborhood, with large prospects, or rather designs, one for boys and another for girls. The latter by a Miss Errington, and though it is only small as yet, I will keep my ears open for her in such directions. The encouragement is very slight.

I hope you will not be washed away by the Irish sea.

Tell Mother I think my cold was not wholly owing to imprudence. Perhaps I was being acclimated.

Tell Father that Mr. Tappan, whose son I know, — and whose clerks young Tappan and Waldo are, — has invented and established a new and very important business, which Waldo thinks would allow them to burn ninety-nine out of one hundred of the stores in New York, which now only offset and cancel one another. It is a kind of intelligence office for the whole country, with branches in the principal cities, giving information with regard to the credit and affairs of every man of business of the country. Of course it is not popular at the South and West. It is an extensive business and will employ a great many clerks.

Love to all — not forgetting Aunt and Aunts — and Miss and Mrs. Ward.

On the 23d of May he wrote from Castleton to his sister Helen thus:—

DEAR HELEN, — In place of something fresher, I send you the following verses from my Journal, written some time ago:—

Brother, where dost thou dwell?
What sun shines for thee now?
Dost thou indeed fare well
As we wished here below?

What season didst thou find?
'T was winter here.
Are not the Fates more kind
Than they appear?

Is thy brow clear again,
As in thy youthful years?
And was that ugly pain
The summit of thy fears? ¹

Yet thou wast cheery still;
They could not quench thy fire;
Thou didst abide their will,
And then retire.

Where chiefly shall I look
To feel thy presence near?
Along the neighboring brook
May I thy voice still hear?

Dost thou still haunt the brink
Of yonder river's tide?
And may I ever think
That thou art by my side?

¹ An allusion to the strange and painful death of John Thoreau, by lockjaw. He had slightly wounded himself in shaving, and the cut became inflamed and brought on that hideous and deforming malady, of which, by sympathy, Henry also partook, though he recovered.

What bird wilt thou employ
To bring me word of thee?
For it would give them joy, —
’T would give them liberty,
To serve their former lord
With wing and minstrelsy.

A sadder strain mixed with their song,
They ’ve slower built their nests;
Since thou art gone
Their lively labor rests.

Where is the finch, the thrush
I used to hear?
Ah, they could well abide
The dying year.

Now they no more return,
I hear them not;
They have remained to mourn,
Or else forgot.

As the first letter of Thoreau to Emerson was to thank him for his lofty friendship, so now the first letter to Mrs. Emerson, after leaving her house, was to say similar things, with a passing allusion to her love of flowers and of gardening, in which she surpassed all his acquaintance in Concord, then and afterward. A letter to Emerson followed, touching on the *Dial* and on several of his new and old acquaintance. “Rockwood Hoar” is the person since known as judge and cabinet officer, — the brother of Senator Hoar, and of Thoreau’s special friends Elizabeth and Edward Hoar. Channing is the poet, who had lately printed his first volume, without finding many readers.

TO MRS. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, STATEN ISLAND, May 22, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I believe a good many conversations with you were left in an unfinished state, and now indeed I don't know where to take them up. But I will resume some of the unfinished silence. I shall not hesitate to know you. I think of you as some elder sister of mine, whom I could not have avoided, — a sort of lunar influence, — only of such age as the moon, whose time is measured by her light. You must know that you represent to me woman, for I have not traveled very far or wide, — and what if I had? I like to deal with you, for I believe you do not lie or steal, and these are very rare virtues. I thank you for your influence for two years. I was fortunate to be subjected to it, and am now to remember it. It is the noblest gift we can make; what signify all others that can be bestowed? You have helped to keep my life “on loft,” as Chaucer says of Griselda, and in a better sense. You always seemed to look down at me as from some elevation, — some of your high humilities, — and I was the better for having to look up. I felt taxed not to disappoint your expectation; for could there be any accident so sad as to be respected for something better than we are? It was a pleasure even to go away from you, as it is not to meet some, as it apprised me of my high relations; and such a departure is a sort of further introduction and meeting. Nothing makes the earth seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance; they make the latitudes and longitudes.

You must not think that fate is so dark there, for even here I can see a faint reflected light over Concord, and I think that at this distance I can better weigh the value of a doubt there. Your moonlight, as I have told you, though it is a reflection of the sun, allows of bats and owls and other twilight birds to flit therein. But I am very glad that you can elevate your life with a doubt, for I am sure that it is nothing but an insatiable faith after all that deepens and darkens its current. And your doubt and my confidence are only a difference of expression.

I have hardly begun to live on Staten Island yet; but, like the man who, when forbidden to tread on English ground, carried Scottish ground in his boots, I carry Concord ground in my boots and in my hat, — and am I not made of Concord dust? I cannot realize that it is the roar of the sea I hear now, and not the wind in Walden woods. I find more of Concord, after all, in the prospect of the sea, beyond Sandy Hook, than in the fields and woods.

If you were to have this Hugh the gardener for your man, you would think a new dispensation had commenced. He might put a fairer aspect on the natural world for you, or at any rate a screen between you and the almshouse. There is a beautiful red honeysuckle now in blossom in the woods here, which should be transplanted to Concord; and if what they tell me about the tulip tree be true, you should have that also. I have not seen Mrs. Black yet, but I intend to call on her soon. Have you established those simpler modes of living yet? — “In the full tide of successful operation?”

Tell Mrs. Brown that I hope she is anchored in a secure haven and derives much pleasure still from reading the poets, and that her constellation is not quite set from my sight, though it is sunk so low in that northern horizon. Tell Elizabeth Hoar that her bright present did "carry ink safely to Staten Island," and was a conspicuous object in Master Haven's inventory of my effects. Give my respects to Madam Emerson, whose Concord face I should be glad to see here this summer; and remember me to the rest of the household who have had vision of me. Shake a day-day to Edith, and say good-night to Ellen for me. Farewell.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, STATEN ISLAND, May 23.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I was just going to write to you when I received your letter. I was waiting till I had got away from Concord. I should have sent you something for the *Dial* before, but I have been sick ever since I came here, rather unaccountably, — what with a cold, bronchitis, acclimation, etc., still unaccountably. I send you some verses from my Journal which will help make a packet. I have not time to correct them, if this goes by Rockwood Hoar. If I can finish an account of a winter's walk in Concord, in the midst of a Staten Island summer, — not so wise as true, I trust, — I will send it to you soon.

I have had no later experiences yet. You must not count much upon what I can do or learn in New York. I feel a good way off here; and it is not to be visited, but seen and dwelt in. I have been there but once, and

have been confined to the house since. Everything there disappoints me but the crowd; rather, I was disappointed with the rest before I came. I have no eyes for their churches, and what else they find to brag of. Though I know but little about Boston, yet what attracts me, in a quiet way, seems much meaner and more pretending than there, — libraries, pictures, and faces in the street. You don't know where any respectability inhabits. It is in the crowd in Chatham Street. The crowd is something new, and to be attended to. It is worth a thousand Trinity Churches and Exchanges while it is looking at them, and will run over them and trample them under foot one day. There are two things I hear and am aware I live in the neighborhood of, — the roar of the sea and the hum of the city. I have just come from the beach (to find your letter), and I like it much. Everything there is on a grand and generous scale, — seaweed, water, and sand; and even the dead fishes, horses, and hogs have a rank, luxuriant odor; great shad-nets spread to dry; crabs and horseshoes crawling over the sand; clumsy boats, only for service, dancing like sea-fowl over the surf, and ships afar off going about their business.

Waldo and Tappan carried me to their English ale-house the first Saturday, and Waldo spent two hours here the next day. But Tappan I have only seen. I like his looks and the sound of his silence. They are confined every day but Sunday, and then Tappan is obliged to observe the demeanor of a church-goer to prevent open war with his father.

I am glad that Channing has got settled, and that,

too, before the inroad of the Irish. I have read his poems two or three times over, and partially through and under, with new and increased interest and appreciation. Tell him I saw a man buy a copy at Little & Brown's. He may have been a virtuoso, but we will give him the credit. What with Alcott and Lane and Hawthorne, too, you look strong enough to take New York by storm. Will you tell L., if he asks, that I have been able to do nothing about the books yet?

Believe that I have something better to write you than this. It would be unkind to thank you for particular deeds.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, June 8, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have been to see Henry James, and like him very much. It was a great pleasure to meet him. It makes humanity seem more erect and respectable. I never was more kindly and faithfully catechised. It made me respect myself more to be thought worthy of such wise questions. He is a man, and takes his own way, or stands still in his own place. I know of no one so patient and determined to have the good of you. It is almost friendship, such plain and human dealing. I think that he will not write or speak inspiringly; but he is a refreshing, forward-looking and forward-moving man, and he has naturalized and humanized New York for me. He actually reproaches you by his respect for your poor words. I had three hours' solid talk with him, and he asks me to make free use of his house. He wants an expression

of your faith, or to be sure that it is faith, and confesses that his own treads fast upon the neck of his understanding. He exclaimed, at some careless answer of mine: "Well, you Transcendentalists are wonderfully consistent. I must get hold of this somehow!" He likes Carlyle's book,¹ but says that it leaves him in an excited and unprofitable state, and that Carlyle is so ready to obey his humor that he makes the least vestige of truth the foundation of any superstructure, not keeping faith with his better genius nor truest readers.

I met Wright on the stairs of the Society Library, and W. H. Channing and Brisbane on the steps. The former (Channing) is a concave man, and you see by his attitude and the lines of his face that he is retreating from himself and from yourself, with sad doubts. It is like a fair mask swaying from the drooping boughs of some tree whose stem is not seen. He would break with a conchoidal fracture. You feel as if you would like to see him when he has made up his mind to run all the risks. To be sure, he doubts because he has a great hope to be disappointed, but he makes the possible disappointment of too much consequence. Brisbane, with whom I did not converse, did not impress me favorably. He looks like a man who has lived in a cellar, far gone in consumption. I barely saw him, but he did not look as if he could let Fourier go, in any case, and throw up his hat. But I need not have come to New York to write this.

I have seen Tappan for two or three hours, and

¹ *Past and Present.*

like both him and Waldo; but I always see those of whom I have heard well with a slight disappointment. They are so much better than the great herd, and yet the heavens are not shivered into diamonds over their heads. Persons and things flit so rapidly through my brain nowadays that I can hardly remember them. They seem to be lying in the stream, stemming the tide, ready to go to sea, as steamboats when they leave the dock go off in the opposite direction first, until they are headed right, and then begins the steady revolution of the paddle-wheels; and *they* are not quite cheerily headed anywhither yet, nor singing amid the shrouds as they bound over the billows. There is a certain youthfulness and generosity about them, very attractive; and Tappan's more reserved and solitary thought commands respect.

After some ado, I discovered the residence of Mrs. Black, but there was palmed off on me, in her stead, a Mrs. Grey (quite an inferior color), who told me at last that she was not Mrs. Black, but her mother, and was just as glad to see me as Mrs. Black would have been, and so, forsooth, would answer just as well. Mrs. Black had gone with Edward Palmer to New Jersey, and would return on the morrow.

I don't like the city better, the more I see it, but worse. I am ashamed of my eyes that behold it. It is a thousand times meaner than I could have imagined. It will be something to hate, — that's the advantage it will be to me; and even the best people in it are a part of it, and talk coolly about it. The pigs in the street are the most respectable part of the population. When will

the world learn that a million men are of no importance compared with *one* man? But I must wait for a shower of shillings, or at least a slight dew or mizzling of six-pences, before I explore New York very far.

The sea-beach is the best thing I have seen. It is very solitary and remote, and you only remember New York occasionally. The distances, too, along the shore, and inland in sight of it, are unaccountably great and startling. The sea seems very near from the hills, but it proves a long way over the plain, and yet you may be wet with the spray before you can believe that you are there. The far seems near, and the near far. Many rods from the beach, I step aside for the Atlantic, and I see men drag up their boats on to the sand, with oxen, stepping about amid the surf, as if it were possible they might draw up Sandy Hook.

I do not feel myself especially serviceable to the good people with whom I live, except as inflictions are sanctified to the righteous. And so, too, must I serve the boy. I can look to the Latin and mathematics sharply, and for the rest behave myself. But I cannot be in his neighborhood hereafter as his Educator, of course, but as the hawks fly over my-own head. I am not attracted toward him but as to youth generally. He shall frequent me, however, as much as he can, and I'll be I.

Bradbury¹ told me, when I passed through Boston,

¹ Of the publishing house of Bradbury & Soden, in Boston, which had taken Nathan Hale's *Boston Miscellany* off his hands, and had published in it, with promise of payment, Thoreau's "Walk to Wachusett." But much time had passed, and the debt was not paid; hence the lack of a "shower of shillings" which the letter laments. Emerson's reply gives the first news of the actual beginning of Alcott's short-

that he was coming to New York the following Saturday, and would then settle with me, but he has not made his appearance yet. Will you, the next time you go to Boston, present that order for me which I left with you?

If I say less about Waldo and Tappan now, it is, perhaps, because I may have more to say by and by. Remember me to your mother and Mrs. Emerson, who, I hope, is quite well. I shall be very glad to hear from her, as well as from you. I have very hastily written out something for the *Dial*, and send it only because you are expecting something, — though something better. It seems idle and Howittish, but it may be of more worth in Concord, where it belongs. In great haste. Farewell.

TO HIS FATHER AND MOTHER (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, June 8, 1843.

DEAR PARENTS, — I have got quite well now, and like the lay of the land and the look of the sea very much, — only the country is so fair that it seems rather too much as if it were made to be looked at. I have been to New York four or five times, and have run about the island a good deal.

George Ward, when I last saw him, which was at his house in Brooklyn, was studying the daguerreotype process, preparing to set up in that line. The boats run now almost every hour from 8 A. M. to 7 P. M., back and forth, so that I can get to the city much more easily lived paradise at Fruitlands, and dwells with interest on the affairs of the rural and lettered circle at Concord.

than before. I have seen there one Henry James, a lame man, of whom I had heard before, whom I like very much; and he asks me to make free use of his house, which is situated in a pleasant part of the city, adjoining the University. I have met several people whom I knew before, and among the rest Mr. Wright, who was on his way to Niagara.

I feel already about as well acquainted with New York as with Boston,—that is, about as little, perhaps. It is large enough now, and they intend it shall be larger still. Fifteenth Street, where some of my new acquaintance live, is two or three miles from the Battery, where the boat touches,—clear brick and stone, and no “give” to the foot; and they have laid out, though not built, up to the 149th street above. I had rather see a brick for a specimen, for my part, such as they exhibited in old times. You see it is “quite a day’s training” to make a few calls in different parts of the city (to say nothing of twelve miles by water and land,—*i. e.*, not brick and stone), especially if it does not rain shillings, which might interest omnibuses in your behalf. Some omnibuses are marked “Broadway — Fourth Street,” and they go no farther; others “Eighth Street,” and so on,—and so of the other principal streets. (This letter will be circumstantial enough for Helen.)

This is in all respects a very pleasant residence,—much more rural than you would expect of the vicinity of New York. There are woods all around. We breakfast at half past six, lunch, if we will, at twelve, and dine or sup at five; thus is the day partitioned off.

From nine to two, or thereabouts, I am the schoolmaster, and at other times as much the pupil as I can be. Mr. and Mrs. Emerson are not indeed of my kith or kin in any sense; but they are irreproachable and kind. I have met no one yet *on the island* whose acquaintance I shall cultivate, — or hoe round, — unless it be our neighbor Captain Smith, an old fisherman, who catches the fish called “moss-bonkers” — so it sounds — and invites me to come to the beach, where he spends the week, and see him and his fish.

Farms are for sale all around here, and so, I suppose men are for purchase. North of us live Peter Wandell, Mr. Mell, and Mr. Disosway (don't mind the spelling), as far as the Clove road; and south, John Britton, Van Pelt, and Captain Smith, as far as the Fingerboard road. Behind is the hill, some 250 feet high, on the side of which we live; and in front the forest and the sea, — the latter at the distance of a mile and a half.

Tell Helen that Miss Errington is provided with assistance. This were a good place as any to establish a school, if one could wait a little. Families come down here to board in the summer, and three or four have been already established this season.

As for money matters, I have not set my traps yet, but I am getting my bait ready. Pray, how does the garden thrive, and what improvements in the pencil line? I miss you all very much. Write soon, and send a Concord paper to

Your affectionate son,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

The traps of this sportsman were magazine articles, — but the magazines that would pay much for papers were very few in 1843. One such had existed in Boston for a short time, — the *Miscellany*, — and it printed a good paper of Thoreau's, but the pay was not forthcoming. His efforts to find publishers more liberal in New York were not successful. But he continued to write for fame in the *Dial*, and helped to edit that.

TO MRS. EMERSON.

STATEN ISLAND, June 20, 1843.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,— I have only read a page of your letter, and have come out to the top of the hill at sunset, where I can see the ocean, to prepare to read the rest. It is fitter that it should hear it than the walls of my chamber. The very crickets here seem to chirp around me as they did not before. I feel as if it were a great daring to go on and read the rest, and then to live accordingly. There are more than thirty vessels in sight going to sea. I am almost afraid to look at your letter. I see that it will make my life very steep, but it may lead to fairer prospects than this.

You seem to me to speak out of a very clear and high heaven, where any one may be who stands so high. Your voice seems not a voice, but comes as much from the blue heavens as from the paper.

My dear friend, it was very noble in you to write me so trustful an answer. It will do as well for another world as for this; such a voice is for no particular time nor person, but it makes him who may hear it stand for all that is lofty and true in humanity. The thought

of you will constantly elevate my life; it will be something always above the horizon to behold, as when I look up at the evening star. I think I know your thoughts without seeing you, and as well here as in Concord. You are not at all strange to me.

I could hardly believe, after the lapse of one night, that I had such a noble letter still at hand to read, — that it was not some fine dream. I looked at midnight to be sure that it was real. I feel that I am unworthy to know you, and yet they will not permit it wrongfully.

I, perhaps, am more willing to deceive by appearances than you say you are; it would not be worth the while to tell how willing; but I have the power perhaps too much to forget my meanness as soon as seen, and not be incited by permanent sorrow. My actual life is unspeakably mean compared with what I know and see that it might be. Yet the ground from which I see and say this is some part of it. It ranges from heaven to earth, and is all things in an hour. The experience of every past moment but belies the faith of each present. We never conceive the greatness of our fates. Are not these faint flashes of light which sometimes obscure the sun their certain dawn?

My friend, I have read your letter as if I was not reading it. After each pause I could defer the rest forever. The thought of you will be a new motive for every right action. You are another human being whom I know, and might not our topic be as broad as the universe? What have we to do with petty rumbling news? We have our own great affairs. Sometimes in Concord I found my actions dictated, as it were, by your

influence, and though it led almost to trivial Hindoo observances, yet it was good and elevating. To hear that you have sad hours is not sad to me. I rather rejoice at the richness of your experience. Only think of some sadness away in Pekin, — unseen and unknown there. What a mine it is! Would it not weigh down the Celestial Empire, with all its gay Chinese? Our sadness is not sad, but our cheap joys. Let us be sad about all we see and are, for so we demand and pray for better. It is the constant prayer and whole Christian religion. I could hope that you would get well soon, and have a healthy body for this world, but I know this cannot be; and the Fates, after all, are the accomplishers of our hopes. Yet I do hope that you may find it a worthy struggle, and life seem grand still through the clouds.

What wealth is it to have such friends that we cannot think of them without elevation! And we can think of them any time and anywhere, and it costs nothing but the lofty disposition. I cannot tell you the joy your letter gives me, which will not quite cease till the latest time. Let me accompany your finest thought.

I send my love to my other friend and brother, whose nobleness I slowly recognize.

HENRY.

TO MRS. THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, July 7, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER, — I was very glad to get your letter and papers. Tell Father that circumstantial letters make very substantial reading, at any rate. I like to

know even how the sun shines and garden grows with you. I did not get my money in Boston, and probably shall not at all. Tell Sophia that I have pressed some blossoms of the tulip tree for her. They look somewhat like white lilies. The magnolia, too, is in blossom here.

Pray, have you the seventeen-year locust in Concord? The air here is filled with their din. They come out of the ground at first in an imperfect state, and, crawling up the shrubs and plants, the perfect insect bursts out through the back. They are doing great damage to the fruit and forest trees. The latter are covered with dead twigs, which in the distance look like the blossoms of the chestnut. They bore every twig of last year's growth in order to deposit their eggs in it. In a few weeks the eggs will be hatched, and the worms fall to the ground and enter it, and in 1860 make their appearance again. I conversed about their coming this season before they arrived. They do no injury to the leaves, but, beside boring the twigs, suck their sap for sustenance. Their din is heard by those who sail along the shore from the distant woods, — Phar-r-r-aoh. Phar-r-r-aoh. They are departing now. Dogs, cats, and chickens subsist mainly upon them in some places.

I have not been to New York for more than three weeks. I have had an interesting letter from Mr. Lane,¹ describing their new prospects. My pupil and I are getting on apace. He is remarkably well advanced in Latin, and is well advancing.

¹ At Fruitlands with the Alcotts. See Sanborn's *Thoreau*, p. 137, for this letter.

Your letter has just arrived. I was not aware that it was so long since I wrote home; I only knew that I had sent five or six letters to the town. It is very refreshing to hear from you, though it is not all good news. But I trust that Stearns Wheeler is not dead. I should be slow to believe it. He was made to work very well in this world. There need be no tragedy in his death.

The demon which is said to haunt the Jones family, hovering over their eyelids with wings steeped in juice of poppies, has commenced another campaign against me. I am "clear Jones" in this respect at least. But he finds little encouragement in my atmosphere, I assure you, for I do not once fairly lose myself, except in those hours of truce allotted to rest by immemorial custom. However, this skirmishing interferes sadly with my literary projects, and I am apt to think it a good day's work if I maintain a soldier's eye till nightfall. Very well, it does not matter much in what wars we serve, whether in the Highlands or the Lowlands. Everywhere we get soldiers' pay still.

Give my love to Aunt Louisa, whose benignant face I sometimes see right in the wall, as naturally and necessarily shining on my path as some star of unaccountably greater age and higher orbit than myself. Let it be inquired by her of George Minott, as from me, — for she sees him, — if he has seen any pigeons yet, and tell him there are plenty of jack snipes here. As for William P., the "worthy young man," — as I live, my eyes have not fallen on him yet.

I have not had the influenza, though here are its head-

quarters, — unless my first week's cold was it. Tell Helen I shall write to her soon. I have heard Lucretia Mott. This is badly written; but the worse the writing the sooner you get it this time from

Your affectionate son,

H. D. T.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, July 8, 1843.

DEAR FRIENDS, — I was very glad to hear your voices from so far. I do not believe there are eight hundred human beings on the globe. It is all a fable, and I cannot but think that you speak with a slight outrage and disrespect of Concord when you talk of fifty of them. There are not so many. Yet think not that I have left all behind, for already I begin to track my way over the earth, and find the cope of heaven extending beyond its horizon, — forsooth, like the roofs of these Dutch houses. My thoughts revert to those dear hills and that *river* which so fills up the world to its brim, — worthy to be named with Mincius and Alpheus, — still drinking its meadows while I am far away. How can it run heedless to the sea, as if I were there to countenance it? George Minott, too, looms up considerably, — and many another old familiar face. These things all look sober and respectable. They are better than the environs of New York, I assure you.

I am pleased to think of Channing as an inhabitant of the gray town. Seven cities contended for Homer dead. Tell him to remain at least long enough to establish Concord's right and interest in him. I was begin-

ning to know the man. In imagination I see you pilgrims taking your way by the red lodge and the cabin of the brave farmer man, so youthful and hale, to the still cheerful woods. And Hawthorne, too, I remember as one with whom I sauntered, in old heroic times, along the banks of the Scamander, amid the ruins of chariots and heroes. Tell him not to desert, even after the tenth year. Others may say, "Are there not the cities of Asia?" But what are they? Staying at home is the heavenly way.

And Elizabeth Hoar, my brave townswoman, to be sung of poets, — if I may speak of her whom I do not know. Tell Mrs. Brown that I do not forget her, going her way under the stars through this chilly world, — I did *not* think of the wind, — and that I went a little way with her. Tell her not to despair. Concord's little arch does not span all our fate, nor is what transpires under it law for the universe.

And least of all are forgotten those walks in the woods in ancient days, — too sacred to be idly remembered, — when their aisles were pervaded as by a fragrant atmosphere. They still seem youthful and cheery to my imagination as Sherwood and Barnsdale, — and of far purer fame. Those afternoons when we wandered o'er Olympus, — and those hills, from which the sun was seen to set, while still our day held on its way.

"At last he rose and twitched his mantle blue;
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new."

I remember these things at midnight, at rare intervals. But know, my friends, that I a good deal hate you all in my most private thoughts, as the substratum of the

little love I bear you. Though you are a rare band, and do not make half use enough of one another.

I think this is a noble number of the *Dial*.¹ It perspires thought and feeling. I can speak of it now a little like a foreigner. Be assured that it is not written in vain,—it is not for me. I hear its prose and its verse. They provoke and inspire me, and they have my sympathy. I hear the sober and the earnest, the sad and the cheery voices of my friends, and to me it is a long letter of encouragement and reproof; and no doubt so it is to many another in the land. So don't give up the ship. Methinks the verse is hardly enough better than the prose. I give my vote for the "Notes from the Journal of a Scholar," and wonder you don't print them faster. I want, too, to read the rest of the "Poet and the Painter." Miss Fuller's is a noble piece,—rich, extempore writing, talking with pen in hand. It is too good not to be better, even. In writing, conversation should be folded many times thick. It is the height of art that, on the first perusal, plain common sense should appear; on the second, severe truth; and on a third, beauty; and, having these warrants for its depth and reality, we may then enjoy the beauty for evermore. The sea-piece is of the best that is going, if not of the best that is staying. You have spoken a good word for Carlyle. As for the "Winter's Walk," I should be glad to have it printed in the *Dial* if you think it good

¹ Emerson also was satisfied with it for once, and wrote to Thoreau: "Our *Dial* thrives well enough in these weeks. I print W. E. Channing's 'Letters,' or the first ones, but he does not care to have them named as his for a while. They are very agreeable reading."

enough, and will criticise it; otherwise send it to me, and I will dispose of it.

I have not been to New York for a month, and so have not seen Waldo and Tappan. James has been at Albany meanwhile. You will know that I only describe my personal adventures with people; but I hope to see more of them, and *judge* them too. I am sorry to learn that Mrs. Emerson is no better. But let her know that the Fates pay a compliment to those whom they make sick, and they have not to ask, "What have I done?"

Remember me to your mother, and remember me yourself as you are remembered by

H. D. T.

I had a friendly and cheery letter from Lane a month ago.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT ROXBURY).

STATEN ISLAND, July 21, 1843.

DEAR HELEN,—I am not in such haste to write home when I remember that I make my readers pay the postage. But I believe I have not taxed you before.

I have pretty much explored this island, inland and along the shore, finding my health inclined me to the peripatetic philosophy. I have visited telegraph stations, Sailors' Snug Harbors, Seaman's Retreats, Old Elm Trees, where the Huguenots landed, Britton's Mills, and all the villages on the island. Last Sunday I walked over to Lake Island Farm, eight or nine miles from here, where Moses Prichard lived, and found the present occupant, one Mr. Davenport, formerly from

Massachusetts, with three or four men to help him, raising sweet potatoes and tomatoes by the acre. It seemed a cool and pleasant retreat, but a hungry soil. As I was coming away, I took my toll out of the soil in the shape of arrowheads, which may after all be the surest crop, certainly not affected by drought.

I am well enough situated here to observe one aspect of the modern world at least. I mean the migratory, — the western movement. Sixteen hundred immigrants arrived at quarantine ground on the 4th of July, and more or less every day since I have been here. I see them occasionally washing their persons and clothes: or men, women, and children gathered on an isolated quay near the shore, stretching their limbs and taking the air; the children running races and swinging on this artificial piece of the land of liberty, while their vessels are undergoing purification. They are detained but a day or two, and then go up to the city, for the most part without having *landed* here.

In the city, I have seen, since I wrote last, W. H. Channing, at whose home, in Fifteenth Street, I spent a few pleasant hours, discussing the all-absorbing question “what to do for the race.” (He is sadly in earnest about going up the river to rusticate for six weeks, and issues a new periodical called *The Present* in September.) Also Horace Greeley, editor of the *Tribune*, who is cheerfully in earnest, at his office of all work, a hearty New Hampshire boy as one would wish to meet, and says, “Now be neighborly,” and believes only, or mainly, first, in the Sylvania Association, somewhere in Pennsylvania; and, secondly, and most of all, in a new

association to go into operation soon in New Jersey, with which he is connected. Edward Palmer came down to see me Sunday before last. As for Waldo and Tappan, we have strangely dodged one another, and have not met for some weeks.

I believe I have not told you anything about Lucretia Mott. It was a good while ago that I heard her at the Quaker Church in Hester Street. She is a preacher, and it was advertised that she would be present on that day. I liked all the proceedings very well, their plainly greater harmony and sincerity than elsewhere. They do nothing in a hurry. Every one that walks up the aisle in his square coat and expansive hat has a history, and comes from a house to a house. The women come in one after another in their Quaker bonnets and handkerchiefs, looking all like sisters or so many chickadees. At length, after a long silence, — waiting for the Spirit, — Mrs. Mott rose, took off her bonnet, and began to utter very deliberately what the Spirit suggested. Her self-possession was something to see, if all else failed; but it did not. Her subject was, “The Abuse of the Bible,” and thence she straightway digressed to slavery and the degradation of woman. It was a good speech, — Transcendentalism in its mildest form. She sat down at length, and, after a long and decorous silence, in which some seemed to be really digesting her words, the elders shook hands, and the meeting dispersed. On the whole, I liked their ways and the plainness of their meeting-house. It looked as if it was indeed made for service.

I think that Stearns Wheeler has left a gap in the

community not easy to be filled. Though he did not exhibit the highest qualities of the scholar, he promised, in a remarkable degree, many of the essential and rarer ones; and his patient industry and energy, his reverent love of letters, and his proverbial accuracy, will cause him to be associated in my memory even with many venerable names of former days. It was not wholly unfit that so pure a lover of books should have ended his pilgrimage at the great book-mart of the world. I think of him as healthy and brave, and am confident that if he had lived he would have proved useful in more ways than I can describe. He would have been authority on all matters of fact, and a sort of connecting link between men and scholars of different walks and tastes. The literary enterprises he was planning for himself and friends remind me of an older and more studious time. So much, then, remains for us to do who survive. Love to all. Tell all my friends in Concord that I do not send my love, but retain it still.

Your affectionate brother.

TO MRS. THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, August 6, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER, — As Mr. William Emerson is going to Concord on Tuesday, I must not omit sending a line by him, — though I wish I had something more weighty for so direct a post. I believe I directed my last letter to you by mistake; but it must have appeared that it was addressed to Helen. At any rate, this is to you without mistake.

I am chiefly indebted to your letters for what I have

learned of Concord and family news, and am very glad when I get one. I should have liked to be in Walden woods with you, but not with the railroad. I think of you all very often, and wonder if you are still separated from me only by so many miles of earth, or so many miles of memory. This life we live is a strange dream, and I don't believe at all any account men give of it. Methinks I should be content to sit at the back door in Concord, under the poplar tree, henceforth forever. Not that I am homesick at all, — for places are strangely indifferent to me, — but Concord is still a cynosure to my eyes, and I find it hard to attach it, even in imagination, to the rest of the globe, and tell where the seam is.

I fancy that this Sunday evening you are pouring over some select book, almost transcendental perchance, or else “Burgh's Dignity,” or Massillon, or the *Christian Examiner*. Father has just taken one more look at the garden, and is now absorbed in Chaptelle, or reading the newspaper quite abstractedly, only looking up occasionally over his spectacles to see how the rest are engaged, and not to miss any newer news that may not be in the paper. Helen has slipped in for the fourth time to learn the very latest item. Sophia, I suppose, is at Bangor; but Aunt Louisa, without doubt, is just flitting away to some good meeting, to save the credit of you all.

It is still a cardinal virtue with me to keep awake. I find it impossible to write or read except at rare intervals, but am, generally speaking, tougher than formerly. I could make a pedestrian tour round the

world, and sometimes think it would perhaps be better to do at once the things I *can*, rather than be trying to do what at present I cannot do well. However, I shall awake sooner or later.

I have been translating some Greek, and reading English poetry, and a month ago sent a paper to the *Democratic Review*, which, at length, they were sorry they could not accept; but they could not adopt the sentiments. However, they were very polite, and earnest that I should send them something else, or reform that.

I go moping about the fields and woods here as I did in Concord, and, it seems, am thought to be a surveyor, — an Eastern man inquiring narrowly into the condition and value of land, etc., here, preparatory to an extensive speculation. One neighbor observed to me, in a mysterious and half-inquisitive way, that he supposed I must be pretty well acquainted with the state of things; that I kept pretty close; he did n't see any surveying instruments, but perhaps I had them in my pocket.

I have received Helen's note, but have not heard of Frisbie Hoar yet.¹ She is a faint-hearted writer, who could not take the responsibility of blotting one sheet alone. However, I like very well the blottings I get. Tell her I have not seen Mrs. Child nor Mrs. Sedgwick.

Love to all from your affectionate son.

¹ Afterwards Senator Hoar of Massachusetts, but then in Harvard College.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, August 7, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I fear I have nothing to send you worthy of so good an opportunity. Of New York I still know but little, though out of so many thousands there are no doubt many units whom it would be worth my while to know. Mr. James¹ talks of going to Germany soon with his wife to learn the language. He says he must know it; can never learn it here; there he may absorb it; and is very anxious to learn beforehand where he had best locate himself to enjoy the advantage of the highest culture, learn the language in its purity, and not exceed his limited means. I referred him to Longfellow. Perhaps you can help him.

I have had a pleasant talk with Channing; and Greeley, too, it was refreshing to meet. They were both much pleased with your criticism on Carlyle, but thought that you had overlooked what chiefly concerned them in the book, — its practical aim and merits.

I have also spent some pleasant hours with Waldo and Tappan at their counting-room, or rather intelligence office.

I must still reckon myself with the innumerable army of invalids, — undoubtedly in a fair field they would rout the well, — though I am tougher than formerly. Methinks I could paint the sleepy god more truly than the poets have done, from more intimate experience.

¹ Henry James, Senior.

Indeed, I have not kept my eyes very steadily open to the things of this world of late, and hence have little to report concerning them. However, I trust the awakening will come before the last trump, — and then perhaps I may remember some of my dreams.

I study the aspects of commerce at its Narrows here, where it passes in review before me, and this seems to be beginning at the right end to understand this Babylon. I have made a very rude translation of the Seven against Thebes, and Pindar too I have looked at, and wish he was better worth translating. I believe even the best things are not equal to their fame. Perhaps it would be better to translate fame itself, — or is not that what the poets themselves do? However, I have not done with Pindar yet. I sent a long article on Etzler's book to the *Democratic Review* six weeks ago, which at length they have determined not to accept, as they could not subscribe to all the opinions, but asked for other matter, — purely literary, I suppose. O'Sullivan wrote me that articles of this kind have to be referred to the circle who, it seems, are represented by this journal, and said something about "collective we" and "homogeneity."

Pray don't think of Bradbury & Soden¹ any more, —

¹ Emerson had written, July 20: "I am sorry to say that when I called on Bradbury & Soden, nearly a month ago, their partner, in their absence, informed me that they should not pay you, at present, any part of their debt on account of the *Boston Miscellany*. After much talking, all the promise he could offer was 'that within a year it would probably be paid,' — a probability which certainly looks very slender. The very worst thing he said was the proposition that you

“For good deed done through praïere
Is sold and bought too dear, I wis,
To herte that of great valor is.”

I see that they have given up their shop here.

Say to Mrs. Emerson that I am glad to remember how she too dwells there in Concord, and shall send her anon some of the thoughts that belong to her. As for Edith, I seem to see a star in the east over where the young child is. Remember me to Mrs. Brown.

These letters for the most part explain themselves, with the aid of several to Thoreau's family, which the purpose of Emerson, in 1865, to present his friend in a stoical character, had excluded from the collection then printed. Mention of C. S. Wheeler and his sad death in Germany had come to him from Emerson, as well as from his own family at Concord, — of whose occupations Thoreau gives so genial a picture in the letter of August 6 to his mother. Emerson wrote: “You will have read and heard the sad news to the little village of Lincoln, of Stearns Wheeler's death. Such an overthrow to the hopes of his parents made me think more of them than of the loss the community will suffer in his kindness, diligence, and ingenuous mind.” He died at Leipsic, in the midst of Greek studies which have since been taken up and carried farther by a child of Concord, Professor Goodwin of the same university. Henry James, several times mentioned in the correspondence, was the moral and theological essayist should take your payment in the form of *Boston Miscellanies*! I shall not fail to refresh their memory at intervals.”

(father of the novelist Henry James, and the distinguished Professor James of Harvard), who was so striking a personality in Concord and Cambridge circles for many years. W. H. Channing was a Christian Socialist fifty years ago, — cousin of Ellery Channing, and nephew and biographer of Dr. Channing. Both he and Horace Greeley were then deeply interested in the Fourierist scheme of association, one development of which was going on at Brook Farm, under direction of George Ripley, and another, differing in design, at Fruitlands, under Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane. The jocose allusions of Thoreau to his Jones ancestors (the descendants of the Tory Colonel Jones of Weston) had this foundation in fact, — that his uncle, Charles Dunbar, soon to be named in connection with Daniel Webster, suffered from a sort of lethargy, which would put him to sleep in the midst of conversation. Webster had been retained in the once famous “Wyman case,” of a bank officer charged with fraud, and had exerted his great forensic talent for a few days in the Concord court-house. Emerson wrote Thoreau: “You will have heard of the Wyman trial, and the stir it made in the village. But the Cliff and Walden knew nothing of that.”

TO MRS. THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

CASTLETON, Tuesday, August 29, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER, — Mr. Emerson has just given me warning that he is about to send to Concord, which I will endeavor to improve. I am a great deal more wakeful than I was, and growing stout in other respects,

—so that I may yet accomplish something in the literary way; indeed, I should have done so before now but for the slowness and poverty of the “Reviews” themselves. I have tried sundry methods of earning money in the city, of late, but without success: have rambled into every bookseller’s or publisher’s house, and discussed their affairs with them. Some propose to me to do what an honest man cannot. Among others, I conversed with the Harpers — to see if they might not find me useful to them; but they say that they are making \$50,000 annually, and their motto is to let well alone. I find that I talk with these poor men as if I were over head and ears in business, and a few thousands were no consideration with me. I almost reproach myself for bothering them so to no purpose; but it is a very valuable experience, and the best introduction I could have.

We have had a tremendous rain here last Monday night and Tuesday morning. I was in the city at Giles Waldo’s, and the streets at daybreak were absolutely impassable for the water. Yet the accounts of the storm that you may have seen are exaggerated, as indeed are all such things, to my imagination. On Sunday I heard Mr. Bellows preach here on the island; but the fine prospect over the Bay and Narrows, from where I sat, preached louder than he, — though he did far better than the average, if I remember aright. I should have liked to see Daniel Webster walking about Concord; I suppose the town shook, every step he took. But I trust there were some sturdy Concordians who were not tumbled down by the jar, but repre-

sented still the upright town. Where was George Minott? he would not have gone far to see him. Uncle Charles should have been there, — he might as well have been catching cat naps in Concord as anywhere.

And then, what a whetter-up of his memory this event would have been! You'd have had all the classmates again in alphabetical order reversed, — “and Seth Hunt and Bob Smith — and he was a student of my father's, — and where's Put now? and I wonder — you — if Henry's been to see George Jones yet! A little account with Stow, — Balcom, — Bigelow, poor miserable t-o-a-d, — (sound asleep.) I vow, you, — what noise was that? — saving grace — and few there be — That's clear as preaching, — Easter Brooks, — morally deprived, — How charming is divine philosophy, — some wise and some otherwise, — Heighho! (sound asleep again) Webster's a smart fellow — bears his age well, — how old should you think he was? you — does he look as if he were ten years younger than I?”

I met, or rather, was overtaken by Fuller, who tended for Mr. How, the other day, in Broadway. He dislikes New York very much. The Mercantile Library, — that is, its Librarian, presented me with a stranger's ticket, for a month, and I was glad to read the Reviews there, and Carlyle's last article. I have bought some pantaloons; stockings show no holes yet. These pantaloons cost \$2.25 ready made.

In haste.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, September 14, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — Miss Fuller will tell you the news from these parts, so I will only devote these few moments to what she does n't know as well. I was absent only one day and night from the island, the family expecting me back immediately. I was to earn a certain sum before winter, and thought it worth the while to try various experiments. I carried *The Agriculturist* about the city, and up as far as Manhattanville, and called at the Croton Reservoir, where, indeed, they did not want any Agriculturists, but paid well enough in their way.

Literature comes to a poor market here; and even the little that I write is more than will sell. I have tried *The Dem. Review*, *The New Mirror*, and *Brother Jonathan*.¹ The last two, as well as the *New World*, are overwhelmed with contributions which cost nothing, and are worth no more. *The Knickerbocker* is too poor, and only *The Ladies' Companion* pays. O'Sullivan is printing the manuscript I sent him some time ago, having objected only to my want of sympathy with the Committee.

I doubt if you have made more corrections in my manuscript than I should have done ere this, though

¹ It may need to be said that these were New York weeklies — the *Mirror*, edited in part by N. P. Willis, and the *New World* by Park Benjamin, formerly of Boston, whose distinction it is to have first named Hawthorne as a writer of genius. "Miss Fuller" was Margaret, — not yet resident in New York, whither she went to live in 1844.

they may be better; but I am glad you have taken any pains with it. I have not prepared any translations for the *Dial*, supposing there would be no room, though it is the only place for them.

I have been seeing men during these days, and trying experiments upon trees; have inserted three or four hundred buds (quite a Buddhist, one might say). Books I have access to through your brother and Mr. McKean, and have read a good deal. Quarles's "Divine Poems" as well as "Emblems" are quite a discovery.

I am very sorry Mrs. Emerson is so sick. Remember me to her and to your mother. I like to think of your living on the banks of the Mill Brook, in the midst of the garden with all its weeds; for what are botanical distinctions at this distance?

TO HIS MOTHER (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, October 1, 1843.

DEAR MOTHER, — I hold together remarkably well as yet, — speaking of my outward linen and woolen man; no holes more than I brought away, and no stitches needed yet. It is marvelous. I think the Fates must be on my side, for there is less than a plank between me and — Time, to say the least. As for Eldorado, that is far off yet. My bait will not tempt the rats, — they are too well fed. The *Democratic Review* is poor, and can only afford half or quarter pay, which it *will* do; and they say there is a *Ladies' Companion* that pays, — but I could not write anything companionable. However, speculate as we will, it is quite

gratuitous; for life, nevertheless and never the more, goes steadily on, well or ill-fed, and clothed somehow, and "honor bright" withal. It is very gratifying to live in the prospect of great successes always; and for that purpose we must leave a sufficient foreground to see them through. All the painters prefer distant prospects for the greater breadth of view and delicacy of tint. But this is no news, and describes no new conditions.

Meanwhile I am somnambulic at least, — stirring in my sleep; indeed, quite awake. I read a good deal, and am pretty well known in the libraries of New York. Am in with the librarian (one Dr. Forbes) of the Society Library, who has lately been to Cambridge to learn liberality, and has come back to let me take out some un-take-out-able books, which I was threatening to read on the spot. And Mr. McKean, of the Mercantile Library, is a true gentleman (a former tutor of mine), and offers me every privilege there. I have from him a perpetual stranger's ticket, and a citizen's rights besides, — all which privileges I pay handsomely for by improving.

A canoe race "came off" on the Hudson the other day, between Chippeways and New Yorkers, which must have been as moving a sight as the buffalo hunt which I witnessed. But canoes and buffaloes are all lost, as is everything here, in the mob. It is only the people have come to see one another. Let them advertise that there will be a gathering at Hoboken, — having bargained with the ferryboats, — and there will be, and they need not throw in the buffaloes.

I have crossed the bay twenty or thirty times, and

have seen a great many immigrants going up to the city for the first time: Norwegians, who carry their old-fashioned farming-tools to the West with them, and will buy nothing here for fear of being cheated; English operatives, known by their pale faces and stained hands, who will recover their birthright in a little cheap sun and wind; English travelers on their way to the Astor House, to whom I have done the honors of the city; whole families of emigrants cooking their dinner upon the pavement, — all sunburnt, so that you are in doubt where the foreigner's face of flesh begins; their tidy clothes laid on, and then tied to their swathed bodies, which move about like a bandaged finger, — caps set on the head as if woven of the hair, which is still growing at the roots, — each and all busily cooking, stooping from time to time over the pot, and having something to drop in it, that so they may be entitled to take something out, forsooth. They look like respectable but straitened people, who may turn out to be Counts when they get to Wisconsin, and will have this experience to relate to their children.

Seeing so many people from day to day, one comes to have less respect for flesh and bones, and thinks they must be more loosely joined, of less firm fibre, than the few he had known. It must have a very bad influence on children to see so many human beings at once, — mere herds of men.

I came across Henry Bigelow a week ago, sitting in front of a hotel in Broadway, very much as if he were under his father's stoop. He is seeking to be admitted into the bar in New York, but as yet had not succeeded.

I directed him to Fuller's store, which he had not found, and invited him to come and see me if he came to the island. Tell Mrs. and Miss Ward that I have not forgotten them, and was glad to hear from George — with whom I spent last night — that they had returned to C. Tell Mrs. Brown that it gives me as much pleasure to know that she thinks of me and my writing as if I had been the author of the piece in question, — but I did not even read over the papers I sent. The *Mirror* is really the most readable journal here. I see that they have printed a short piece that I wrote to sell, in the *Dem. Review*, and still keep the review of "Paradise," that I may include in it a notice of another book by the same author, which they have found, and are going to send me.

I don't know when I shall come home; I like to keep that feast in store. Tell Helen that I do not see any advertisement for her, and I am looking for myself. If I could find a rare opening, I might be tempted to try with her for a year, till I had paid my debts, but for such I am sure it is not well to go out of New England. Teachers are but poorly recompensed, even here. Tell her and Sophia (if she is not gone) to write to me. Father will know that this letter is to him as well as to you. I send him a paper which usually contains the news, — if not all that is stirring, all that has stirred, — and even draws a little on the future. I wish he would send me, by and by, the paper which contains the results of the Cattle-Show. You must get Helen's eyes to read this, though she is a scoffer at honest penmanship.

TO MRS. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, October 16, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I promised you some thoughts long ago, but it would be hard to tell whether these are the ones. I suppose that the great questions of "Fate, Freewill, Foreknowledge absolute," which used to be discussed at Concord, are still unsettled. And here comes [W. H.] Channing, with his *Present* to vex the world again, — a rather galvanic movement, I think. However, I like the man all the better, though his schemes the less. I am sorry for his confessions. Faith never makes a confession.

Have you had the annual berrying party, or sat on the Cliffs a whole day this summer? I suppose the flowers have fared quite as well since I was not there to scoff at them; and the hens, without doubt, keep up their reputation.

I have been reading lately what of Quarles's poetry I could get. He was a contemporary of Herbert, and a kindred spirit. I think you would like him. It is rare to find one who was so much of a poet and so little of an artist. He wrote long poems, almost epics for length, about Jonah, Esther, Job, Samson, and Solomon, interspersed with meditations after a quite original plan, — Shepherd's Oracles, Comedies, Romances, Fancies, and Meditations, — the quintessence of meditation, — and Enchiridions of Meditation all divine, — and what he calls his Morning Muse; besides prose works as curious as the rest. He was an unwearied Christian, and a reformer of some old school withal. Hopelessly

quaint, as if he lived all alone and knew nobody but his wife, who appears to have revered him. He never doubts his genius; it is only he and his God in all the world. He uses language sometimes as greatly as Shakespeare; and though there is not much straight grain in him, there is plenty of tough, crooked timber. In an age when Herbert is revived, Quarles surely ought not to be forgotten.

I will copy a few such sentences as I should read to you if there. Mrs. Brown, too, may find some nutriment in them.

How does the Saxon Edith do? Can you tell yet to which school of philosophy she belongs, — whether she will be a fair saint of some Christian order, or a follower of Plato and the heathen? Bid Ellen a good-night or good-morning from me, and see if she will remember where it comes from; and remember me to Mrs. Brown, and your mother, and Elizabeth Hoar.

TO R. W. EMERSON (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, October 17, 1843.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I went with my pupil to the Fair of the American Institute, and so lost a visit from Tappan, whom I met returning from the Island. I should have liked to hear more news from his lips, though he had left me a letter and the *Dial*, which is a sort of circular letter itself. I find Channing's¹

¹ The allusion here is to Ellery Channing's "Youth of the Poet and Painter," in the *Dial*, — an unfinished autobiography. The *Present* of W. H. Channing, his cousin, named above, was a short-lived periodical, begun September 15, 1843, and ended in April, 1844. "McKean"

letters full of life, and I enjoy their wit highly. Lane writes straight and solid, like a guide-board, but I find that I put off the "social tendencies" to a future day, which may never come. He is always Shaker fare, quite as luxurious as his principles will allow. I feel as if I were ready to be appointed a committee on poetry, I have got my eyes so whetted and proved of late, like the knife-sharpener I saw at the Fair, certified to have been "in constant use in a gentleman's family for more than two years." Yes, I ride along the ranks of the English poets, casting terrible glances, and some I blot out, and some I spare. McKean has imported, within the year, several new editions and collections of old poetry, of which I have the reading, but there is a good deal of chaff to a little meal, — hardly worth bolting. I have just opened Bacon's "Advancement of Learning" for the first time, which I read with great delight. It is more like what Scott's novels *were* than anything.

I see that I was very blind to send you my manuscript in such a state; but I have a good *second* sight, at least. I could still shake it in the wind to some advantage, if it would hold together. There are some sad mistakes in the printing. It is a little unfortunate that the "Ethnical Scriptures" should hold out so well, though it does really hold out. The Bible ought not to be very large. Is it not singular that, while the religious world is gradually picking to pieces its old testaments,

was Henry Swasey McKean, who was a classmate of Charles Emerson at Harvard in 1828, a tutor there in 1830-35, and who died in 1857.

here are some coming slowly after, on the seashore, picking up the durable relics of perhaps older books, and putting them together again?

Your Letter to Contributors is excellent, and hits the nail on the head. It will taste sour to their palates at first, no doubt, but it will bear a sweet fruit at last. I like the poetry, especially the Autumn verses. They ring true. Though I am quite weather-beaten with poetry, having weathered so many epics of late. The "Sweep Ho!" sounds well this way. But I have a good deal of fault to find with your "Ode to Beauty." The tune is altogether unworthy of the thoughts. You slope too quickly to the rhyme, as if that trick had better be performed as soon as possible, or as if you stood over the line with a hatchet, and chopped off the verses as they came out, some short and some long. But give us a long reel, and we'll cut it up to suit ourselves. It sounds like parody. "Thee knew I of old," "Remediless thirst," are some of those stereotyped lines. I am frequently reminded, I believe, of Jane Taylor's "Philosopher's Scales," and how the world

"Flew out with a bounce,"

which

"Yerked the philosopher out of his cell;"

or else of

"From the climes of the sun all war-worn and weary."

I had rather have the thought come ushered with a flourish of oaths and curses. Yet I love your poetry as I do little else that is near and recent, especially when you get fairly round the end of the line, and are not thrown back upon the rocks. To read the lecture on

“The Comic” is as good as to be in our town meeting or Lyceum once more.

I am glad that the Concord farmers plowed well this year; it promises that something will be done these summers. But I am suspicious of that *Brittonner*, who advertises so many cords of *good* oak, chestnut, and maple wood for sale. *Good!* ay, good for what? And there shall not be left a stone upon a stone. But no matter, — let them hack away. The sturdy Irish arms that do the work are of more worth than oak or maple. Methinks I could look with equanimity upon a long street of Irish cabins, and pigs and children reveling in the genial Concord dirt; and I should still find my Walden Wood and Fair Haven in their tanned and happy faces.

I write this in the corn-field — it being washing-day — with the inkstand Elizabeth Hoar gave me;¹ though it is not redolent of corn-stalks, I fear. Let me not be

¹ This inkstand was presented by Miss Hoar, with a note dated “Boston, May 2, 1843,” which deserves to be copied: —

DEAR HENRY, — The rain prevented me from seeing you the night before I came away, to leave with you a parting assurance of good will and good hope. We have become better acquainted within the two past years than in our whole life as schoolmates and neighbors before; and I am unwilling to let you go away without telling you that I, among your other friends, shall miss you much, and follow you with remembrance and all best wishes and confidence. Will you take this little inkstand and try if it will carry ink safely from Concord to Staten Island? and the pen, which, if you can write with steel, may be made sometimes the interpreter of friendly thoughts to those whom you leave beyond the reach of your voice, — or record the inspirations of Nature, who, I doubt not, will be as faithful to you who trust her in the sea-girt Staten Island as in Concord woods and meadows. Good-by, and εὖ πράττειν, which, a wise man says, is the only salutation fit for the wise.

Truly your friend,

E. HOAR.

forgotten by Channing and Hawthorne, nor our gray-suited neighbor under the hill [Edmund Hosmer].

This letter will be best explained by a reference to the *Dial* for October, 1843. The "Ethnical Scriptures" were selections from the Brahminical books, from Confucius, etc., such as we have since seen in great abundance. The Autumn verses are by Channing; "Sweep Ho!" by Ellen Sturgis, afterwards Mrs. Hooper; the "Youth of the Poet and Painter" also by Channing. The Letter to Contributors, which is headed simply "A Letter," is by Emerson, and has been much overlooked by his later readers; his "Ode to Beauty" is very well known, and does not deserve the slashing censure of Thoreau, though, as it now stands, it is better than first printed. Instead of

"Love drinks at thy banquet
Remediless thirst,"

we now have the perfect phrase,

"Love drinks at thy *fountain*
False waters of thirst."

"The Comic" is also Emerson's. There is a poem, "The Sail," by William Tappan, so often named in these letters, and a sonnet by Charles A. Dana, afterwards of the *New York Sun*.

TO HELEN THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

STATEN ISLAND, October 18, 1843.

DEAR HELEN, — What do you mean by saying that "we have written eight times by private opportunity"? Isn't it the more the better? And am I not glad of it?

But people have a habit of not letting me know it when they go to Concord from New York. I endeavored to get you *The Present* when I was last in the city, but they were all sold; and now another is out, which I will send, if I get it. I did not send the *Democratic Review*, because I had no copy, and my piece was not worth fifty cents. You think that Channing's words would apply to me too, as living more in the natural than the moral world; but I think that you mean the world of men and women rather, and reformers generally. My objection to Channing and all that fraternity is that they need and deserve sympathy themselves rather than are able to render it to others. They want faith, and mistake their private ail for an infected atmosphere; but let any one of them recover hope for a moment, and right his *particular* grievance, and he will no longer train in that company. To speak or do anything that shall concern mankind, one must speak and act as if well, or from that grain of health which he has left. This *Present* book indeed is blue, but the hue of its thoughts is yellow. I say these things with the less hesitation, because I have the jaundice myself; but I also know what it is to be well. But do not think that one can escape from mankind who is one of them, and is so constantly dealing with them.

I could not undertake to form a nucleus of an institution for the development of infant minds, where none already existed. It would be too cruel. And then, as if looking all this while one way with benevolence, to walk off another about one's own affairs suddenly! Something of this kind is an unavoidable objection to that.

I am very sorry to hear such bad news about Aunt Maria; but I think that the worst is always the least to be apprehended, for nature is averse to it as well as we. I trust to hear that she is quite well soon. I send love to her and Aunt Jane. For three months I have not known whether to think of Sophia as in Bangor or Concord, and now you say that she is going directly. Tell her to write to me, and establish her whereabouts, and also to get well directly. And see that she has something worthy to do when she gets down there, for that 's the best remedy for disease.

Your affectionate brother,

H. D. THOREAU.

II

GOLDEN AGE OF ACHIEVEMENT

THIS was the golden age of hope and achievement for the Concord poets and philosophers. Their ranks were not yet broken by death (for Stearns Wheeler was hardly one of them), their spirits were high, and their faith in each other unbounded. Emerson wrote thus from Concord, while Thoreau was perambulating Staten Island and calling on "the false booksellers:" "Ellery Channing is excellent company, and we walk in all directions. He remembers you with great faith and hope; thinks you ought not to see Concord again these ten years — that you ought to grind up fifty Concords in your mill — and much other opinion and counsel he holds in store on this topic. Hawthorne walked with me yesterday afternoon, and not until after our return did I read his 'Celestial Railroad,' which has a serene strength which we cannot afford not to praise, in this low life."

The Transcendentalists had their quarterly, and even their daily organ, for Mr. Greeley put the *Tribune* at their service, and gave places on its staff to Margaret Fuller and her brother-in-law Channing, and would gladly have made room for Emerson in its columns, if the swift utterance of a morning paper had suited his habit of publication. While in the

Tribune office, Ellery Channing thus wrote to Thoreau, after he had returned home, disappointed with New York, to make lead pencils in his father's shop at Concord.

ELLERY CHANNING TO THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

March 5, 1845.

MY DEAR THOREAU, — The handwriting of your letter is so miserable that I am not sure I have made it out. If I have, it seems to me you are the same old sixpence you used to be, rather rusty, but a genuine piece. I see nothing for you in this earth but that field which I once christened "Briars;" go out upon that, build yourself a hut, and there begin the grand process of devouring yourself alive. I see no alternative, no other hope for you. Eat yourself up; you will eat nobody else, nor anything else. Concord is just as good a place as any other; there are, indeed, more people in the streets of that village than in the streets of this. This is a singularly muddy town; muddy, solitary, and silent.

In your line, I have not done a great deal since I arrived here; I do not mean the Pencil line, but the Staten Island line, having been there once, to walk on a beach by the telegraph, but did not visit the scene of your dominical duties. Staten Island is very distant from No. 30 Ann Street. I saw polite William Emerson in November last, but have not caught any glimpse of him since then. I am as usual suffering the various alternations from agony to despair, from hope to fear, from pain to pleasure. Such wretched one-sided pro-

ductions as you know nothing of the universal man; you may think yourself well off.

That baker, Hecker, who used to live on two crackers a day, I have not seen; nor Black, nor Vethake, nor Danesaz, nor Rynders, nor any of Emerson's old cronies, excepting James, a little fat, rosy Swedenborgian amateur with the look of a broker and the brains and heart of a Pascal. William Channing, I see nothing of him; he is the dupe of good feelings, and I have all-too-many of these now. I have seen something of your friends, Waldo and Tappan, and have also seen our good man McKean, the keeper of that stupid place, the Mercantile Library.

Acting on Channing's hint, and an old fancy of his own, Thoreau, in the summer of 1845, built his cabin at Walden and retired there; while Hawthorne entered the Salem custom-house, and Alcott, returning defeated from his Fruitlands paradise, was struggling with poverty and discouragement at Concord. Charles Lane, his English comrade, withdrew to New York or its vicinity, and in 1846 to London, whence he had come in 1842, full of hope and enthusiasm. A few notes of his, or about him, may here find place. They were sent to Thoreau at Concord, and show that Lane continued to value his candid friend. The first, written after leaving Fruitlands, introduces the late Father Hecker, who had been one of the family there, to Thoreau. The second and third relate to the sale of the Alcott-Lane Library, and other matters.

CHARLES LANE TO THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

BOSTON, December 3, 1843.

DEAR FRIEND, — As well as my wounded hands permit, I have scribbled something for friend Hecker, which if agreeable may be the opportunity for entering into closer relations with him; a course I think likely to be mutually encouraging, as well as beneficial to all men. But let it reach him in the manner most conformable to your own feelings. That from all perils of a false position you may shortly be relieved, and landed in the position where you feel “at home,” is the sincere wish of yours most friendly,

CHARLES LANE.

MR. HENRY THOREAU,
Earl House, Coach Office.

NEW YORK, February 17, 1846.

DEAR FRIEND, — The books you were so kind as to deposit about two years and a half ago with Messrs. Wiley & Putnam have all been sold, but as they were left in your name it is needful, in strict business, that you should send an order to them to pay to me the amount due. I will therefore thank you to inclose me such an order at your earliest convenience in a letter addressed to your admiring friend,

CHARLES LANE,
Post Office, New York City.

BOONTON, N. J., March 30, 1846.

DEAR FRIEND, — If the human nature participates of the elemental I am no longer in danger of becoming

suburban, or super-urban, that is to say, too urbane. I am now more likely to be converted into a petrification, for slabs of rock and foaming waters never so abounded in my neighborhood. A very Peter I shall become: on this rock *He* has built *his church*. You would find much joy in these eminences and in the views therefrom.

My pen has been necessarily unproductive in the continued motion of the sphere in which I have lately been moved. You, I suppose, have not passed the winter to the world's unprofit.

You never have seen, as I have, the book with a preface of 450 pages and a text of 60. My letter is like unto it.

I have only to add that your letter of the 26th February did its work, and that I submit to you cordial thanks for the same. Yours truly,

CHAS. LANE.

I hope to hear occasionally of your doings and those of your compeers in your classic plowings and diggings.

TO HENRY D. THOREAU,
Concord Woods.

Thoreau's letters to Lane have not come into any editor's hands. In England, before Lane's discovery by Alcott, in 1842, he had been the editor of the *Mark-Lane Gazette* (or something similar), which gave the price-current of wheat, etc., in the English markets. Emerson found him in Hampstead, London, in February, 1848, and wrote to Thoreau: "I went

last Sunday, for the first time, to see Lane at Hampstead, and dined with him. He was full of friendliness and hospitality; has a school of sixteen children, one lady as matron, then Oldham. That is all the household. They looked just comfortable."

"Lane instructed me to ask you to forward his *Dials* to him, which must be done, if you can find them. Three bound volumes are among his books in my library. The fourth volume is in unbound numbers at J. Munroe & Co.'s shop, received there in a parcel to my address, a day or two before I sailed, and which I forgot to carry to Concord. It must be claimed without delay. It is certainly there, — was opened by me and left; and they can inclose all four volumes to Chapman for me."

This would indicate that he had not lost interest in the days and events of his American sojourn, — unpleasant as some of these must have been to the methodical, prosaic Englishman.

While at Walden, Thoreau wrote but few letters; there is, however, a brief correspondence with Mr. J. E. Cabot, then an active naturalist, coöperating with Agassiz in his work on the American fishes, who had requested Thoreau to procure certain species from Concord. The letters were written from the cabin at Walden, and it is this same structure that figures in the letters from Thoreau to Emerson in England, as the proposed nucleus of the cottage of poor Hugh the gardener, before he ran away from Concord, as there narrated, on a subsequent page. The first sending of river-fish was in the end of April, 1847. Then followed this letter:—

TO ELLIOT CABOT (AT BOSTON).

CONCORD, May 8, 1847.

DEAR SIR, — I believe that I have not yet acknowledged the receipt of your notes, and a five-dollar bill. I am very glad that the fishes afforded Mr. Agassiz so much pleasure. I could easily have obtained more specimens of the *Sternothærus odoratus*; they are quite numerous here. I will send more of them ere long. Snapping turtles are perhaps as frequently met with in our muddy river as anything, but they are not always to be had when wanted. It is now rather late in the season for them. As no one makes a business of seeking them, and they are valued for soups, science may be forestalled by appetite in this market, and it will be necessary to bid pretty high to induce persons to obtain or preserve them. I think that from seventy-five cents to a dollar apiece would secure all that are in any case to be had, and will set this price upon their heads, if the treasury of science is full enough to warrant it.

You will excuse me for taking toll in the shape of some, it may be, impertinent and unscientific inquiries. There are found in the waters of the Concord, so far as I know, the following kinds of fishes: —

Pickereel. Besides the common, fishermen distinguish the brook, or grass pickereel, which bites differently, and has a shorter snout. Those caught in Walden, hard by my house, are easily distinguished from those caught in the river, being much heavier in proportion to their size, stouter, firmer-fleshed, and lighter-colored.

The little pickerel which I sent last, jumped into the boat in its fright.

Pouts. Those in the pond are of different appearance from those that I have sent.

Breams. Some more green, others more brown.

Suckers. The horned, which I sent first, and the black. I am not sure whether the common or Boston sucker is found here. Are the three which I sent last, which were speared in the river, identical with the three black suckers, taken by hand in the brook, which I sent before? I have never examined them minutely.

Perch. The river perch, of which I sent five specimens in the box, are darker-colored than those found in the pond. There are myriads of small ones in the latter place, and but few large ones. I have counted ten transverse bands on some of the smaller.

Lampreys. Very scarce since the dams at Lowell and Billerica were built.

Shiners. *Leuciscus chrysoleucus*, silver and golden. What is the difference?

Roach or *Chiverin* (*Leuciscus pulchellus*, *argenteus*, or what not). The *white* and the *red*. The former described by Storer, but the latter, which deserves distinct notice, not described, to my knowledge. Are the minnows (called here dace), of which I sent three live specimens, I believe, one larger and two smaller, the young of this species?

Trout. Of different appearance in different brooks in this neighborhood.

Eels.

Red-finned Minnows, of which I sent you a dozen

alive. I have never recognized them in any books. Have they any scientific name?

If convenient, will you let Dr. Storer see these brook minnows? There is also a kind of dace or fresh-water smelt in the pond, which is, perhaps, distinct from any of the above. What of the above does M. Agassiz particularly wish to see? Does he want more specimens of kinds which I have already sent? There are also minks, muskrats, frogs, lizards, tortoises, snakes, caddice-worms, leeches, muscles, etc., or rather, *here they are*. The funds which you sent me are nearly exhausted. Most fishes can now be taken with the hook, and it will cost but little trouble or money to obtain them. The snapping turtles will be the main expense. I should think that five dollars more, at least, might be profitably expended.

TO ELLIOT CABOT (AT BOSTON).

CONCORD, June 1, 1847.

DEAR SIR,—I send you 15 pouts, 17 perch, 13 shiners, 1 larger land tortoise, and 5 muddy tortoises, all from the pond by my house. Also 7 perch, 5 shiners, 8 breams, 4 dace (?), 2 muddy tortoises, 5 painted do., and 3 land do., all from the river. One black snake, alive, and one dormouse (?) caught last night in my cellar. The tortoises were all put in alive; the fishes were alive yesterday, *i. e.*, Monday, and some this morning. Observe the difference between those from the pond, which is pure water, and those from the river.

I will send the light-colored trout and the pickerel with the longer snout, which is our large one, when I

meet with them. I have set a price upon the heads of snapping turtles, though it is late in the season to get them.

If I wrote red-finned eel, it was a slip of the pen; I meant red-finned minnow. This is their name here; though smaller specimens have but a slight reddish tinge at the base of the pectorals.

Will you, at your leisure, answer these queries?

Do you mean to say that the twelve banded minnows which I sent are undescribed, or only one? What are the scientific names of those minnows which have any? Are the four dace I send to-day identical with one of the former, and what are they called? Is there such a fish as the black sucker described, — distinct from the common?

AGASSIZ TO THOREAU (AT CONCORD).

In October, 1849, Agassiz, in reply to a request from Thoreau that he would lecture in Bangor, sent this characteristic letter :—

“ I remember with much pleasure the time when you used to send me specimens from your vicinity, and also our short interview in the Marlborough Chapel.¹ I am under too many obligations of your kindness to forget it. I am very sorry that I missed your visit in Boston; but for eighteen months I have now been settled in Cambridge. It would give me great pleasure to engage for the lectures you ask from me for the Bangor Lyceum; but I find it has been last winter such a heavy tax upon my health, that I wish for the present to make

¹ Where Agassiz was giving a course of Lowell lectures.

no engagements; as I have some hope of making my living this year by other efforts, — and beyond the necessity of my wants, both domestic and scientific, I am determined not to exert myself; as all the time I can thus secure to myself must be exclusively devoted to science. My only business is my intercourse with nature; and could I do without draughtsmen, lithographers, etc., I would live still more retired. This will satisfy you that whenever you come this way I shall be delighted to see you, — since I have also heard something of your mode of living.”

Agassiz had reason indeed to remember the collections made by Thoreau, since (from the letters of Mr. Cabot) they aided him much in his comparison of the American with the European fishes. When the first firkin of Concord fish arrived in Boston, where Agassiz was then working, “he was highly delighted, and began immediately to spread them out and arrange them for his draughtsman. Some of the species he had seen before, but never in so fresh condition; others, as the breams and the pout, he had seen only in spirits, and the little tortoise he knew only from the books. I am sure you would have felt fully repaid for your trouble,” adds Mr. Cabot, “if you could have seen the eager satisfaction with which he surveyed each fin and scale.” Agassiz himself wrote the same day: “I have been highly pleased to find that the small mud turtle was really the *Sternotherus odoratus*, as I suspected, — a very rare species, quite distinct from the snapping turtle. The suckers were all of one and the same species

(*Catastomus tuberculatus*); the female has the tubercles. As I am very anxious to send some snapping turtles home with my first boxes, I would thank Mr. T. very much if he could have some taken for me."

Mr. Cabot goes on: "Of the perch Agassiz remarked that it was almost identical with that of Europe, but distinguishable, on close examination, by the tubercles on the sub-operculum. . . . More of the painted tortoises would be acceptable. The snapping turtles are very interesting to him as forming a transition from the turtles proper to the alligator and crocodile. . . . We have received three boxes from you since the first." (May 27.) "Agassiz was much surprised and pleased at the extent of the collections you sent during his absence in New York. Among the fishes there is one, and probably two, new species. The fresh-water smelt he does not know. He is very anxious to see the pickerel with the long snout, which he suspects may be the *Esox estor*, or Maskalongé; he has seen this at Albany. . . . As to the minks, etc., I know they would all be very acceptable to him. When I asked him about these, and more specimens of what you have sent, he said, 'I dare not make any request, for I do not know how much trouble I may be giving to Mr. Thoreau; but my method of examination requires many more specimens than most naturalists would care for.'" (June 1.) "Agassiz is delighted to find one, and he thinks two, more new species; one is a Pomotis, — the bream without the red spot in the operculum, and with a red belly and fins. The other is the shallower and lighter colored shiner. The four dace you sent last are *Leuciscus ar-*

genteus. They are different from that you sent before under this name, but which was a new species. Of the four kinds of minnow, two are new. There is a black sucker (*Catostomus nigricans*), but there has been no specimen among those you have sent, and A. has never seen a specimen. He seemed to know your mouse, and called it the white-bellied mouse. It was the first specimen he had seen. I am in hopes to bring or send him to Concord, to look after new *Leucisci*, etc." Agassiz did afterwards come, more than once, and examined turtles with Thoreau.

Soon after this scientific correspondence, Thoreau left his retreat by Walden to take the place of Emerson in his household, while his friend went to visit Carlyle and give lectures in England. The letters that follow are among the longest Thoreau ever composed, and will give a new conception of the writer to those who may have figured him as a cold, stoical, or selfish person, withdrawn from society and its duties. The first describes the setting out of Emerson for Europe.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT BANGOR).

CONCORD, October 24, 1847.

DEAR SOPHIA, — I thank you for those letters about Ktaadn, and hope you will save and send me the rest, and anything else you may meet with relating to the Maine woods. That Dr. Young is both young and green too at traveling in the woods. However, I hope he got "yarbs" enough to satisfy him. I went to Boston the 5th of this month to see Mr. Emerson off to Europe. He sailed in the Washington Irving packet-

ship; the same in which Mr. [F. H.] Hedge went before him. Up to this trip the first mate aboard this ship was, as I hear, one Stephens, a Concord boy, son of Stephens the carpenter, who used to live above Mr. Dennis's. Mr. Emerson's stateroom was like a carpeted dark closet, about six feet square, with a large keyhole for a window. The window was about as big as a saucer, and the glass two inches thick, not to mention another skylight overhead in the deck, the size of an oblong doughnut, and about as opaque. Of course it would be in vain to look up, if any contemplative promenader put his foot upon it. Such will be his lodgings for two or three weeks; and instead of a walk in Walden woods he will take a promenade on deck, where the few trees, you know, are stripped of their bark. The steam-tug carried the ship to sea against a head wind without a rag of sail being raised.

I don't remember whether you have heard of the new telescope at Cambridge or not. They think it is the best one in the world, and have already seen more than Lord Rosse or Herschel. I went to see Perez Blood's, some time ago, with Mr. Emerson. He had not gone to bed, but was sitting in the wood-shed, in the dark, alone, in his astronomical chair, which is all legs and rounds, with a seat which can be inserted at any height. We saw Saturn's rings, and the mountains in the moon, and the shadows in their craters, and the sunlight on the spurs of the mountains in the dark portion, etc., etc. When I asked him the power of his glass, he said it was 85. But what is the power of the

Cambridge glass? 2000!!! The last is about twenty-three feet long.

I think you may have a grand time this winter pursuing some study, — keeping a journal, or the like, — while the snow lies deep without. Winter is the time for study, you know, and the colder it is the more studious we are. Give my respects to the whole Penobscot tribe, and tell them that I trust we are good brothers still, and endeavor to keep the chain of friendship bright, though I do dig up a hatchet now and then. I trust you will not stir from your comfortable winter quarters, Miss Bruin, or even put your head out of your hollow tree, till the sun has melted the snow in the spring, and “the green buds, they are a-swellin’.”

From your

BROTHER HENRY.

This letter will explain some of the allusions in the first letter to Emerson in England. Perez Blood was a rural astronomer living in the extreme north quarter of Concord, next to Carlisle, with his two maiden sisters, in the midst of a fine oak wood; their cottage being one of the points in view when Thoreau and his friends took their afternoon rambles. Sophia Thoreau, the younger and soon the only surviving sister, was visiting her cousins in Maine, the “Penobscot tribe” of whom the letter makes mention, with an allusion to the Indians of that name near Bangor. His letter to her and those which follow were written from Emerson’s house, where Thoreau lived during the master’s absence across the ocean. It was in the orchard of this house that Alcott was building that summer-house at which

Thoreau, with his geometrical eye, makes merry in the next letter.

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, November 14, 1847.

DEAR FRIEND, — I am but a poor neighbor to you here, — a very poor companion am I. I understand that very well, but that need not prevent my *writing* to you now. I have almost never written letters in my life, yet I think I can write as good ones as I frequently see, so I shall not hesitate to write this, such as it may be, knowing that you will welcome anything that reminds you of Concord.

I have banked up the young trees against the winter and the mice, and I will look out, in my careless way, to see when a pale is loose or a nail drops out of its place. The broad gaps, at least, I will occupy. I heartily wish I could be of good service to this household. But I, who have only used these ten digits so long to solve the problem of a living, how can I? The world is a cow that is hard to milk, — life does not come so easy, — and oh, how thinly it is watered ere we get it! But the young bunting calf, he will get at it. There is no way so direct. This is to earn one's living by the sweat of his brow. It is a little like joining a community, this life, to such a hermit as I am; and as I don't keep the accounts, I don't know whether the experiment will succeed or fail finally. At any rate, it is good for society, so I do not regret my transient nor my permanent share in it.

Lidian [Mrs. Emerson] and I make very good house-

keepers. She is a very dear sister to me. Ellen and Edith and Eddy and Aunt Brown keep up the tragedy and comedy and tragic-comedy of life as usual. The two former have not forgotten their old acquaintance; even Edith carries a young memory in her head, I find. Eddy can teach us all how to pronounce. If you should discover any rare hoard of wooden or pewter horses, I have no doubt he will know how to appreciate it. He occasionally surveys mankind from my shoulders as wisely as ever Johnson did. I respect him not a little, though it is I that lift him up so unceremoniously. And sometimes I have to set him down again in a hurry, according to his "mere will and good pleasure." He very seriously asked me, the other day, "Mr. Thoreau, will you be my father?" I am occasionally Mr. Rough-and-tumble with him that I may not miss *him*, and lest he should miss *you* too much. So you must come back soon, or you will be superseded.

Alcott has heard that I laughed, and so set the people laughing, at his arbor, though I never laughed louder than when I was on the ridge-pole. But now I have not laughed for a long time, it is so serious. He is very grave to look at. But, not knowing all this, I strove innocently enough, the other day, to engage his attention to my mathematics. "Did you ever study geometry, the relation of straight lines to curves, the transition from the finite to the infinite? Fine things about it in Newton and Leibnitz." But he would hear none of it, — men of taste preferred the natural curve. Ah, he is a crooked stick himself. He is getting on now so many *knots* an hour. There is one knot at

present occupying the point of highest elevation, — the present highest point; and as many knots as are not handsome, I presume, are thrown down and cast into the pines. Pray show him this if you meet him anywhere in London, for I cannot make him hear much plainer words here. He forgets that I am neither old nor young, nor anything in particular, and behaves as if I had still some of the animal heat in me. As for the building, I feel a little oppressed when I come near it. It has no great disposition to be beautiful; it is certainly a wonderful structure, on the whole, and the fame of the architect will endure as long as it shall stand. I should not show you this side alone, if I did not suspect that Lidian had done complete justice to the other.

Mr. [Edmund] Hosmer has been working at a tannery in Stow for a fortnight, though he has just now come home sick. It seems that he was a tanner in his youth, and so he has made up his mind a little at last. This comes of reading the New Testament. Was n't one of the Apostles a tanner? Mrs. Hosmer remains here, and John looks stout enough to fill his own shoes and his father's too.

Mr. Blood and his company have at length seen the stars through the great telescope, and he told me that he thought it was worth the while. Mr. Peirce made him wait till the crowd had dispersed (it was a Saturday evening), and then was quite polite, — conversed with him, and showed him the micrometer, etc.; and he said Mr. Blood's glass was large enough for all ordinary astronomical work. [Rev.] Mr. Frost and Dr. [Josiah]

Bartlett seemed disappointed that there was no greater difference between the Cambridge glass and the Concord one. They used only a power of 400. Mr. Blood tells me that he is too old to study the calculus or higher mathematics. At Cambridge they think that they have discovered traces of another satellite to Neptune. They have been obliged to exclude the public altogether, at last. The very dust which they raised, "which is filled with minute crystals," etc., as professors declare, having to be wiped off the glasses, would ere long wear them away. It is true enough, Cambridge college is really beginning to wake up and redeem its character and overtake the age. I see by the catalogue that they are about establishing a scientific school in connection with the university, at which any one above eighteen, on paying one hundred dollars annually (Mr. Lawrence's fifty thousand dollars will probably diminish this sum), may be instructed in the highest branches of science, — in astronomy, "theoretical and practical, with the use of the instruments" (so the great Yankee astronomer may be born without delay), in mechanics and engineering to the last degree. Agassiz will ere long commence his lectures in the zoölogical department. A chemistry class has already been formed under the direction of Professor Horsford. A new and adequate building for the purpose is already being erected. They have been foolish enough to put at the end of all this earnest the old joke of a diploma. Let every sheep keep but his own skin, I say.

I have had a tragic correspondence, for the most part all on one side, with Miss —. She did really

wish to — I hesitate to write — marry me. That is the way they spell it. Of course I did not write a deliberate answer. How could I deliberate upon it? I sent back as distinct a *no* as I have learned to pronounce after considerable practice, and I trust that this *no* has succeeded. Indeed, I wished that it might burst, like hollow shot, after it had struck and buried itself and made itself felt there. *There was no other way*. I really had anticipated no such foe as this in my career.

I suppose you will like to hear of my book, though I have nothing worth writing about it. Indeed, for the last month or two I have forgotten it, but shall certainly remember it again. Wiley & Putnam, Munroe, the Harpers, and Crosby & Nichols have all declined printing it with the least risk to themselves; but Wiley & Putnam will print it in their series, and any of them anywhere, at *my* risk. If I liked the book well enough, I should not delay; but for the present I am indifferent. I believe this is, after all, the course you advised, — to let it lie.

I do not know what to say of myself. I sit before my green desk, in the chamber at the head of the stairs, and attend to my thinking, sometimes more, sometimes less distinctly. I am not unwilling to think great thoughts if there are any in the wind, but what they are I am not sure. They suffice to keep me awake while the day lasts, at any rate. Perhaps they will redeem some portion of the night ere long.

I can imagine you astonishing, bewildering, confounding, and sometimes delighting John Bull with your Yankee notions, and that he begins to take a pride in

the relationship at last ; introduced to all the stars of England in succession, after the lecture, until you pine to thrust your head once more into a genuine and unquestionable nebula, if there be any left. I trust a common man will be the most uncommon to you before you return to these parts. I have thought there was some advantage even in death, by which we “mingle with the herd of common men.”

Hugh [the gardener] still has his eye on the Walden *agellum*, and orchards are waving there in the windy future for him. That's the where-I'll-go-next, thinks he; but no important steps are yet taken. He reminds me occasionally of this open secret of his, with which the very season seems to labor, and affirms seriously that as to his wants — wood, stone, or timber — I know better than he. That is a clincher which I shall have to avoid to some extent; but I fear that it is a wrought nail and will not break. Unfortunately, the day after cattle-show — the day after small beer — he was among the missing, but not long this time. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard his spots, nor indeed Hugh — his Hugh.

As I walked over Conantum, the other afternoon, I saw a fair column of smoke rising from the woods directly over my house that was (as I judged), and already began to conjecture if my deed of sale would not be made invalid by this. But it turned out to be John Richardson's young wood, on the southeast of your field. It was burnt nearly all over, and up to the rails and the road. It was set on fire, no doubt, by the same Lucifer that lighted Brooks's lot before. So you

see that your small lot is comparatively safe for this season, the back fire having been already set for you.

They have been choosing between John Keyes and Sam Staples, if the world wants to know it, as representative of this town, and Staples is chosen. The candidates for governor — think of my writing this to you! — were Governor Briggs and General Cushing, and Briggs is elected, though the Democrats have gained. Ain't I a brave boy to know so much of politics for the nonce? But I shouldn't have known it if Coombs had n't told me. They have had a peace meeting here, — I should n't think of telling you if I did n't know anything would do for the English market, — and some men, Deacon Brown at the head, have signed a long pledge, swearing that they will "treat all mankind as brothers henceforth." I think I shall wait and see how they treat me first. I think that Nature meant kindly when she made our brothers few. However, my voice is still for peace. So good-by, and a truce to all joking, my dear friend, from

H. D. T.

Upon this letter some annotations are to be made. "Eddy" was Emerson's youngest child, Edward Waldo, then three years old and upward, — of late years his father's biographer. Hugh, the gardener, of whom more anon, bargained for the house of Thoreau on Emerson's land at Walden, and for a field to go with it; but the bargain came to naught, and the cabin was removed three or four miles to the northwest, where it became a granary for Farmer Clark and his squirrels, near the entrance to the park known as Estabrook's.

Edmund Hosmer was the farming friend and neighbor with whom, at one time, G. W. Curtis and his brother took lodgings, and at another time the Alcott family. The book in question was "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers."

To these letters Emerson replied from England:—

DEAR HENRY,— Very welcome in the parcel was your letter, very precious your thoughts and tidings. It is one of the best things connected with my coming hither that you could and would keep the homestead; that fire-place shines all the brighter, and has a certain permanent glimmer therefor. Thanks, ever more thanks for the kindness which I well discern to the youth of the house: to my darling little horseman of pewter, wooden, rocking, and what other breeds, — destined, I hope, to ride Pegasus yet, and, I hope, not destined to be thrown; to Edith, who long ago drew from you verses which I carefully preserve; and to Ellen, whom by speech, and now by letter, I find old enough to be companionable, and to choose and reward her own friends in her own fashions. She sends me a poem to-day, which I have read three times!

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, December 15, 1847.

DEAR FRIEND,— You are not so far off but the affairs of *this* world still attract you. Perhaps it will be so when we are dead. Then look out. Joshua R. Holman, of Harvard, who says he lived a month with [Charles] Lane at Fruitlands, wishes to *hire* said Lane's

farm for one or more years, and will pay \$125 rent, taking out of the same a half, if necessary, for repairs, — as for a new bank-wall to the barn cellar, which he says is indispensable. Palmer is gone, Mrs. Palmer is going. This is all that is known or that is worth knowing. Yes or no? What to do?

Hugh's plot begins to thicken. He starts thus: eighty dollars on one side; Walden, field and house, on the other. How to bring these together so as to make a garden and a palace?

\$80

Field

House

1st, let \$10 go over to unite the two lots.

\$70

\$6 for Wetherbee's rocks to found your palace on.

\$64

\$64 — so far, indeed, we have already got.

\$4 to bring the rocks to the field.

\$60

Save \$20 by all means, to measure the field, and you have left

\$40 to complete the palace, build cellar, and dig well. Build the

cellar yourself, and let *well* alone, — and now how does

it stand?

\$40 to complete the palace somewhat like this.

For when one asks, “Why do you want twice as much room more?” the reply is, “Parlor, kitchen, and bedroom, — these make the palace.”

“Well, Hugh, what will you do? Here are forty dollars to buy a new house, twelve feet by twenty-five, and add it to the old.”

“Well, Mr. Thoreau, as I tell you, I know no more than a child about it. It shall be just as you say.”

"Then build it yourself, get it roofed, and get in.

"Commence at one end and leave it half done,
And let time finish what money 's begun."

So you see we have forty dollars for a nest egg; sitting on which, Hugh and I alternately and simultaneously, there may in course of time be hatched a house that will long stand, and perchance even lay fresh eggs one day for its owner; that is, if, when he returns, he gives the young chick twenty dollars or more in addition, by way of "swichin," to give it a start in the world.

The *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* came out the 1st of December, but it does not seem to be making a sensation, at least not hereabouts. I know of none in Concord who take or have seen it yet.

We wish to get by all possible means some notion of your success or failure in England, — more than your two letters have furnished. Can't you send a fair sample both of young and of old England's criticism, if there is any printed? Alcott and [Ellery] Channing are equally greedy with myself.

HENRY THOREAU.

C. T. Jackson takes the *Quarterly* (new one), and will lend it to us. Are you not going to send your wife some news of your good or ill success by the newspapers?

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, December 29, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — I thank you for your letter. I was very glad to get it; and I am glad again to write to you. However slow the steamer, no time intervenes

between the writing and the reading of thoughts, but they come freshly to the most distant port. I am here still, and very glad to be here, and shall not trouble you with any complaints because I do not fill my place better. I have had many good hours in the chamber at the head of the stairs, — a solid time, it seems to me. Next week I am going to give an account to the Lyceum of my expedition to Maine. Theodore Parker lectures to-night. We have had Whipple on Genius, — too weighty a subject for him, with his antithetical definitions new-vamped, — what it *is*, what it is *not*, but altogether what it is *not*; cuffing it this way and cuffing it that, as if it were an India-rubber ball. Really, it is a subject which should expand, expand, accumulate itself before the speaker's eyes as he goes on, like the snowballs which the boys roll in the street; and when it stops, it should be so large that he cannot start it, but must leave it there. [H. N.] Hudson, too, has been here, with a dark shadow in the core of him, and his desperate wit, so much indebted to the surface of him, — wringing out his words and snapping them off like a dish-cloth; very remarkable, but not memorable. Singular that these two best lecturers should have so much "wave" in their timber, — their solid parts to be made and kept solid by shrinkage and contraction of the whole, with consequent checks and fissures.

Ellen and I have a good understanding. I appreciate her genuineness. Edith tells me after her fashion: "By and by I shall grow up and be a woman, and then I shall remember how you exercised me." Eddy has been to Boston to Christmas, but can remember nothing but

the coaches, all Kendall's coaches. There is no variety of that vehicle that he is not familiar with. He *did* try twice to tell us something else, but, after thinking and stuttering a long time, said, "I don't know what the word is," — the *one* word, forsooth, that would have disposed of all that Boston phenomenon. If you did not know him better than I, I could tell you more. He is a good companion for me, and I am glad that we are all natives of Concord. It is *young Concord*. Look out, World!

Mr. Alcott seems to have sat down for the winter. He has got Plato and other books to read. He is as large-featured and hospitable to traveling thoughts and thinkers as ever; but with the same Connecticut philosophy as ever, mingled with what is better. If he would only stand upright and toe the line! — though he were to put off several degrees of largeness, and put on a considerable degree of littleness. After all, I think we must call him particularly *your* man.

I have pleasant walks and talks with Channing. James Clark — the Swedenborgian that was — is at the poorhouse, insane with too large views, so that he cannot support himself. I see him working with Fred and the rest. Better than be there and not insane. It is strange that they will make ado when a man's body is buried, but not when he thus really and tragically dies, or seems to die. Away with your funeral processions, — into the ballroom with them! I hear the bell toll hourly over there.¹

Lidian and I have a standing quarrel as to what is

¹ The town almshouse was across the field from the Emerson house.

a suitable state of preparedness for a traveling professor's visit, or for whomsoever else; but further than this we are not at war. We have made up a dinner, we have made up a bed, we have made up a party, and our own minds and mouths, three several times for your professor, and he came not. Three several turkeys have died the death, which I myself carved, just as if he had been there; and the company, too, convened and demeaned themselves accordingly. Everything was done up in good style, I assure you, with only the part of the professor omitted. To have seen the preparation (though Lidian says it was nothing extraordinary) I should certainly have said he was a-coming, but he did not. He must have found out some shorter way to Turkey, — some overland route, I think. By the way, he was complimented, at the conclusion of his course in Boston, by the mayor moving the appointment of a committee to draw up resolutions expressive, etc., which was done.

I have made a few verses lately. Here are some, though perhaps not the best, — at any rate they are the shortest, — on that universal theme, yours as well as mine, and several other people's:—

The good how can we trust!
Only the wise are just.
The good, we use,
The wise we cannot choose;
These there are none above.
The good, they know and love,
But are not known again
By those of lesser ken.
They do not charm us with their eyes,
But they transfix with their advice;

No partial sympathy they feel
 With private woe or private weal,
 But with the universe joy and sigh,
 Whose knowledge is their sympathy.

Good-night.

HENRY THOREAU.

P. S. — I am sorry to send such a medley as this to you. I have forwarded Lane's *Dial* to Munroe, and he tells the expressman that all is right.

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, January 12, 1848.

It is hard to believe that England is so near as from your letters it appears; and that this identical piece of paper has lately come all the way from there hither, begrimed with the English dust which made you hesitate to use it; from England, which is only historical fairyland to me, to America, which I have put my spade into, and about which there is no doubt.

I thought that you needed to be informed of Hugh's progress. He has moved his house, as I told you, and dug his cellar, and purchased stone of Sol Wetherbee for the last, though he has not hauled it; all which has cost sixteen dollars, which I have paid. He has also, as next in order, run away from Concord without a penny in his pocket, "crying" by the way, — having had another long difference with strong beer, and a first one, I suppose, with his wife, who seems to have complained that he sought other society; the one difference leading to the other, perhaps, but I don't know which was the leader. He writes back to his wife from Sterling, near

Worcester, where he is chopping wood, his distantly kind reproaches to her, which I read straight through to her (not to his bottle, which he has with him, and no doubt addresses orally). He says that he will go on to the South in the spring, and will never return to Concord. Perhaps he will not. Life is not tragic enough for him, and he must try to cook up a more highly seasoned dish for himself. Towns which keep a barroom and a gun-house and a reading-room, should also keep a steep precipice whereoff impatient soldiers may jump. His sun went down, *to me*, bright and steady enough in the west, but it never came up in the east. Night intervened. He departed, as when a man dies suddenly; and perhaps wisely, if he was to go, without settling his affairs. They knew that that was a thin soil and not well calculated for pears. Nature is rare and sensitive on the score of nurseries. You may cut down orchards and grow forests at your pleasure. Sand watered with strong beer, though stirred with industry, will not produce grapes. He dug his cellar for the new part too near the old house, Irish like, though I warned him, and it has caved and let one end of the house down. Such is the state of his domestic affairs. I laugh with the *Parcæ* only. He had got the upland and the orchard and a part of the meadow plowed by Warren, at an expense of eight dollars, still unpaid, which of course is no affair of yours.

I think that if an honest and small-familied man, who has no affinity for moisture in him, but who has an affinity for sand, can be found, it would be safe to rent him the shanty as it is, and the land; or you can very easily and

simply let nature keep them still, without great loss. It may be so managed, perhaps, as to be a home for somebody, who shall in return serve you as fencing stuff, and to fix and locate your lot, as we plant a tree in the sand or on the edge of a stream; without expense to you in the meanwhile, and without disturbing its possible future value.

I read a part of the story of my excursion to Ktaadn to quite a large audience of men and boys, the other night, whom it interested. It contains many facts and some poetry. I have also written what will do for a lecture on "Friendship."

I think that the article on you in *Blackwood's* is a good deal to get from the reviewers, — the first purely literary notice, as I remember. The writer is far enough off, in every sense, to speak with a certain authority. It is a better judgment of posterity than the public had. It is singular how sure he is to be mystified by any uncommon sense. But it was generous to put Plato into the list of mystics. His confessions on this subject suggest several thoughts, which I have not room to express here. The old word *seer*, — I wonder what the reviewer thinks that means; whether that *he* was a man who could *see more than himself*.

I was struck by Ellen's asking me, yesterday, while I was talking with Mrs. Brown, if I did not use "*colored words*." She said that she could tell the color of a great many words, and amused the children at school by so doing. Eddy climbed up the sofa, the other day, *of his own accord*, and kissed the picture of his father, — "*right on his shirt, I did*."

I had a good talk with Alcott this afternoon. He is certainly the youngest man of his age we have seen, — just on the threshold of life. When I looked at his gray hairs, his conversation sounded pathetic; but I looked again, and they reminded me of the gray dawn. He is getting better acquainted with Channing, though he says that, if they were to live in the same house, they would soon sit with their backs to each other.¹

You must excuse me if I do not write with sufficient directness to yourself, who are a far-off traveler. It is a little like shooting on the wing, I confess.

Farewell.

HENRY THOREAU.

TO R. W. EMERSON (IN ENGLAND).

CONCORD, February 23, 1848.

DEAR WALDO, — For I think I have heard that that is your name, — my letter which was put last into the leathern bag arrived first. Whatever I may *call* you, I know you better than I know your name, and what becomes of the fittest name if in any sense you are here with him who *calls*, and not there simply to be called?

I believe I never thanked you for your lectures, one and all, which I heard formerly read here in Concord. I *know* I never have. There was some excellent reason each time why I did not; but it will never be too late.

¹ At this date Alcott had passed his forty-eighth year, while Channing and Thoreau were still in the latitude of thirty. Hawthorne had left Concord, and was in the Salem custom-house, the Old Manse having gone back into the occupancy of Emerson's cousins, the Ripleys, who owned it.

I have that advantage, at least, over you in my education.

Lidian is too unwell to write to you; so I must tell you what I can about the children and herself. I am afraid she has not told you how unwell she is, — or to-day perhaps we may say has been. She has been confined to her chamber four or five weeks, and three or four weeks, at least, to her bed, with the jaundice. The doctor, who comes once a day, does not let her read (nor can she now) nor *hear* much reading. She has written her letters to you, till recently, sitting up in bed, but he said he would not come again if she did so. She has Abby and Almira to take care of her, and Mrs. Brown to read to her; and I also, occasionally, have something to read or to say. The doctor says she must not expect to “take any comfort of her life” for a week or two yet. She wishes me to say that she has written two long and full letters to you about the household economies, etc., which she hopes have not been delayed. The children are quite well and full of spirits, and are going through a regular course of picture-seeing, with commentary by me, every evening, for Eddy’s behoof. All the Annuals and “Diadems” are in requisition, and Eddy is forward to exclaim, when the hour arrives, “Now for the demdems!” I overheard this dialogue when Frank [Brown] came down to breakfast the other morning.

Eddy. “Why, Frank, I am astonished that you should leave your boots in the dining-room.”

Frank. “I guess you mean *surprised*, don’t you?”

Eddy. “No, boots!”

“If Waldo were here,” said he, the other night, at bedtime, “we’d be four going upstairs.” Would he like to tell papa anything? No, not anything; but finally, yes, he would, — that one of the white horses in his new barouche is broken! Ellen and Edith will perhaps speak for themselves, as I hear something about letters to be written by them.

Mr. Alcott seems to be reading well this winter: Plato, Montaigne, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Sir Thomas Browne, etc., etc. “I believe I have read them all now, or nearly all,” — those English authors. He is rallying for another foray with his pen, in his latter years, not discouraged by the past, into that crowd of unexpressed ideas of his, that undisciplined Parthian army, which, as soon as a Roman soldier would face, retreats on all hands, occasionally firing backwards; easily routed, not easily subdued, hovering on the skirts of society. Another summer shall not be devoted to the raising of vegetables (Arbors?) which rot in the cellar for want of consumers; but perchance to the arrangement of the material, the brain-crop which the winter has furnished. I have good talks with him. His respect for Carlyle has been steadily increasing for some time. He has read him with new sympathy and appreciation.

I see Channing often. He also goes often to Alcott’s, and confesses that he has made a discovery in him, and gives vent to his admiration or his confusion in characteristic exaggeration; but between this extreme and that you may get a fair report, and draw an inference if you can. Sometimes he will ride a broomstick still, though

there is nothing to keep him, or it, up but a certain centrifugal force of whim, which is soon spent, and there lies your stick, not worth picking up to sweep an oven with now. His accustomed path is strewn with them. But then again, and perhaps for the most part, he sits on the Cliffs amid the lichens, or flits past on noiseless pinion, like the barred owl in the daytime, as wise and unobserved. He brought me a poem the other day, for me, on Walden Hermitage: not remarkable.¹

Lectures begin to multiply on my desk. I have one on Friendship which is new, and the materials of some others. I read one last week to the Lyceum, on The Rights and Duties of the Individual in Relation to Government, — much to Mr. Alcott's satisfaction.

Joel Britton has failed and gone into chancery, but the woods continue to fall before the axes of other men. Neighbor Coombs² was lately found dead in the woods near Goose Pond, with his half-empty jug, after he had been rioting a week. Hugh, by the last accounts, was still in Worcester County. Mr. Hosmer, who is himself again, and living in Concord, has just hauled the rest of your wood, amounting to about ten and a half cords.

The newspapers say that they have printed a pirated edition of your Essays in England. Is it as bad as they say, and undisguised and unmitigated piracy? I thought that the printed scrap would entertain Carlyle, notwithstanding its history. If this generation will see out of its hind-head, why then you may turn your

¹ See Sanborn's *Thoreau*, p. 214, and Channing's *Thoreau*, New Edition, pp. 207-210, for this poem.

² This is the political neighbor mentioned in a former letter.

back on its forehead. Will you forward it to him for me?

This stands written in your day-book: "September 3d. Received of Boston Savings Bank, on account of Charles Lane, his deposit with interest, \$131.33. 16th. Received of Joseph Palmer, on account of Charles Lane, three hundred twenty-three $\frac{36}{100}$ dollars, being the balance of a note on demand for four hundred dollars, with interest, \$323.36."

If you have any directions to give about the trees, you must not forget that spring will soon be upon us.

Farewell. From your friend,

HENRY THOREAU.

Before a reply came to this letter, Thoreau had occasion to write to Mr. Elliot Cabot again. The allusions to the "Week" and to the Walden house are interesting.

TO ELLIOT CABOT.

CONCORD, March 8, 1848.

DEAR SIR, — Mr. Emerson's address is as yet, "R. W. Emerson, care of Alexander Ireland, Esq., Examiner Office, Manchester, England." We had a letter from him on Monday, dated at Manchester, February 10, and he was then preparing to go to Edinburgh the next day, where he was to lecture. He thought that he should get through his northern journeying by the 25th of February, and go to London to spend March and April, and if he did not go to Paris in May, then come home. He has been eminently successful, though the papers this side of the water have been so silent about his adventures.

My book,¹ fortunately, did not find a publisher ready to undertake it, and you can imagine the effect of delay on an author's estimate of his own work. However, I like it well enough to mend it, and shall look at it again directly when I have dispatched some other things.

I have been writing lectures for our own Lyceum this winter, mainly for my own pleasure and advantage. I esteem it a rare happiness to be able to *write* anything, but there (if I ever get there) my concern for it is apt to end. Time & Co. are, after all, the only quite honest and trustworthy publishers that we know. I can sympathize, perhaps, with the barberry bush, whose business it is solely to *ripen* its fruit (though that may not be to sweeten it) and to protect it with thorns, so that it holds on all winter, even, unless some hungry crows come to pluck it. But I see that I must get a few dollars together presently to manure my roots. Is your journal able to pay anything, provided it likes an article well enough? I do not promise one. At any rate, I mean always to spend only words enough to purchase silence with; and I have found that this, which is so valuable, though many writers do not prize it, does not cost much, after all.

I have not obtained any more of the mice which I told you were so numerous in my cellar, as my house

¹ From England Emerson wrote: "I am not of opinion that your book should be delayed a month. I should print it at once, nor do I think that you would incur any risk in doing so that you cannot well afford. It is very certain to have readers and debtors, here as well as there. The *Dial* is absurdly well known here. We at home, I think, are always a little ashamed of it, — *I* am, — and yet here it is spoken of with the utmost gravity, and I do not laugh."

was removed immediately after I saw you, and I have been living in the village since.

However, if I should happen to meet with anything rare, I will forward it to you. I thank you for your kind offers, and will avail myself of them so far as to ask if you can anywhere borrow for me for a short time the copy of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* containing a notice of Mr. Emerson. I should like well to read it, and to read it to Mrs. Emerson and others. If this book is not easy to be obtained, do not by any means trouble yourself about it.

TO R. W. EMERSON.¹

CONCORD, March 23, 1848.

DEAR FRIEND, — Lidian says I must write a sentence about the children. Eddy says he cannot sing, — “not till mother is a-going to be well.” We shall hear his voice very soon, in that case, I trust. Ellen is already thinking what will be done when you come home; but then she thinks it will be some loss that I shall go away. Edith says that I shall come and see them, and always at tea-time, so that I can play with her. Ellen thinks she likes father best because he jumps her sometimes. This is the latest news from

Yours, etc.,

HENRY.

P. S. — I have received three newspapers from you duly which I have not acknowledged. There is an anti-

¹ This letter was addressed, “R. Waldo Emerson, care of Alexander Ireland, Esq., Manchester, England, *via* New York and Steamer Cambria, March 25.” It was mailed in Boston, March 24, and received in Manchester, April 19.

Sabbath convention held in Boston to-day, to which Alcott has gone.

That friend to whom Thoreau wrote most constantly and fully, on all topics, was Mr. Harrison Blake of Worcester, a graduate of Harvard two years earlier than Thoreau, in the same class with two other young men from Concord, — E. R. Hoar and H. B. Dennis. This circumstance may have led to Mr. Blake's visiting the town occasionally, before his intimacy with its poet-naturalist began, in the year 1848. At that time, as Thoreau wrote to Horace Greeley, he had been supporting himself for five years wholly by the labor of his hands; his Walden hermit life was over, yet neither its record nor the first book had been published, and Thoreau was known in literature chiefly by his papers in the *Dial*, which had then ceased for four years. In March, 1848, Mr. Blake read Thoreau's chapter on Persius in the *Dial* for July, 1840, — and though he had read it before without being much impressed by it, he now found in it "pure depth and solidity of thought." "It has revived in me," he wrote to Thoreau, "a haunting impression of you, which I carried away from some spoken words of yours. . . . When I was last in Concord, you spoke of retiring farther from our civilization. I asked you if you would feel no longings for the society of your friends. Your reply was in substance, 'No, I am nothing.' That reply was memorable to me. It indicated a depth of resources, a completeness of renunciation, a poise and repose in the universe, which to me is almost inconceivable; which

in you seemed domesticated, and to which I look up with veneration. I would know of that soul which can say 'I am nothing.' I would be roused by its words to a truer and purer life. Upon me seems to be dawning with new significance the idea that God is here; that we have but to bow before Him in profound submission at every moment, and He will fill our souls with his presence. In this opening of the soul to God, all duties seem to centre; what else have we to do? . . . If I understand rightly the significance of your life, this is it: You would sunder yourself from society, from the spell of institutions, customs, conventionalities, that you may lead a fresh, simple life with God. Instead of breathing a new life into the old forms, you would have a new life without and within. There is something sublime to me in this attitude,—far as I may be from it myself. . . . Speak to me in this hour as you are prompted. . . . I honor you because you abstain from action, and open your soul that you may *be* somewhat. Amid a world of noisy, shallow actors it is noble to stand aside and say, 'I will simply *be*.' Could I plant myself at once upon the truth, reducing my wants to their minimum, . . . I should at once be brought nearer to nature, nearer to my fellow-men, — and life would be infinitely richer. But, alas! I shiver on the brink."

Thus appealed to by one who had so well attained the true Transcendental shibboleth, — "God working in us, both to will and to do," — Thoreau could not fail to make answer, as he did at once, and thus: —

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

[The first of many letters.]

CONCORD, March 27, 1848.

I am glad to hear that any words of mine, though spoken so long ago that I can hardly claim identity with their author, have reached you. It gives me pleasure, because I have therefore reason to suppose that I have uttered what concerns men, and that it is not in vain that man speaks to man. This is the value of literature. Yet those days are so distant, in every sense, that I have had to look at that page again, to learn what was the tenor of my thoughts then. I should value that article, however, if only because it was the occasion of your letter.

I do believe that the outward and the inward life correspond; that if any should succeed to live a higher life, others would not know of it; that difference and distance are one. To set about living a true life is to go a journey to a distant country, gradually to find ourselves surrounded by new scenes and men; and as long as the old are around me, I know that I am not in any true sense living a new or a better life. The outward is only the outside of that which is within. Men are not concealed under habits, but are revealed by them; they are their true clothes. I care not how curious a reason they may give for their abiding by them. Circumstances are not rigid and unyielding, but our habits are rigid. We are apt to speak vaguely sometimes, as if a divine life were to be grafted on to or built over this present as a suitable foundation. This might do if

we could so build over our old life as to exclude from it all the warmth of our affection, and addle it, as the thrush builds over the cuckoo's egg, and lays her own atop, and hatches that only; but the fact is, we — so thin is the partition — hatch them both, and the cuckoo's always by a day first, and that young bird crowds the young thrushes out of the nest. No. Destroy the cuckoo's egg, or build a new nest.

Change is change. No new life occupies the old bodies; — they decay. *It* is born, and grows, and flourishes. Men very pathetically inform the old, accept and wear it. Why put up with the almshouse when you may go to heaven? It is embalming, — no more. Let alone your ointments and your linen swathes, and go into an infant's body. You see in the catacombs of Egypt the result of that experiment, — that is the end of it.

I do believe in simplicity. It is astonishing as well as sad, how many trivial affairs even the wisest man thinks he must attend to in a day; how singular an affair he thinks he must omit. When the mathematician would solve a difficult problem, he first frees the equation of all incumbrances, and reduces it to its simplest terms. So simplify the problem of life, distinguish the necessary and the real. Probe the earth to see where your main roots run. I would stand upon facts. Why not see, — use our eyes? Do men know nothing? I know many men who, in common things, are not to be deceived; who trust no moonshine; who count their money correctly, and know how to invest it; who are said to be prudent and knowing, who yet will stand at

a desk the greater part of their lives, as cashiers in banks, and glimmer and rust and finally go out there. If they *know* anything, what under the sun do they do that for? Do they know what *bread* is? or what it is for? Do they know what life is? If they *knew* something, the places which know them now would know them no more forever.

This, our respectable daily life, on which the man of common sense, the Englishman of the world, stands so squarely, and on which our institutions are founded, is in fact the veriest illusion, and will vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision; but that faint glimmer of reality which sometimes illuminates the darkness of daylight for all men, reveals something more solid and enduring than adamant, which is in fact the cornerstone of the world.

Men cannot conceive of a state of things so fair that it cannot be realized. Can any man honestly consult his experience and say that it is so? Have we any facts to appeal to when we say that our dreams are premature? Did you ever hear of a man who had striven all his life faithfully and singly toward an object and in no measure obtained it? If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated? Did ever a man try heroism, magnanimity, truth, sincerity, and find that there was no advantage in them? that it was a vain endeavor? Of course we do not expect that our paradise will be a garden. We know not what we ask. To look at literature; — how many fine thoughts has every man had! how few fine thoughts are expressed! Yet we never have a fantasy so subtle and ethereal, but

that *talent merely*, with more resolution and faithful persistency, after a thousand failures, might fix and engrave it in distinct and enduring words, and we should see that our dreams are the solidest facts that we know. But I speak not of dreams.

What can be expressed in words can be expressed in life.

My actual life is a fact, in view of which I have no occasion to congratulate myself; but for my faith and aspiration I have respect. It is from these that I speak. Every man's position is in fact too simple to be described. I have sworn no oath. I have no designs on society, or nature, or God. I am simply what I am, or I begin to be that. I *live* in the *present*. I only remember the past, and anticipate the future. I love to live. I love reform better than its modes. There is no history of how bad became better. I believe something, and there is nothing else but that. I know that I am. I know that another is who knows more than I, who takes interest in me, whose creature, and yet whose kindred, in one sense, am I. I know that the enterprise is worthy. I know that things work well. I have heard no bad news.

As for positions, combinations, and details, — what are they? In clear weather, when we look into the heavens, what do we see but the sky and the sun?

If you would convince a man that he does wrong, do right. But do not care to convince him. Men will believe what they see. Let them see.

Pursue, keep up with, circle round and round your life, as a dog does his master's chaise. Do what you

love. Know your own bone; gnaw at it, bury it, unearth it, and gnaw it still. Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life so. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something. All fables, indeed, have their morals; but the innocent enjoy the story. Let nothing come between you and the light. Respect men and brothers only. When you travel to the Celestial City, carry no letter of introduction. When you knock, ask to see God, — none of the servants. In what concerns you much, do not think that you have companions: know that you are alone in the world.

Thus I write at random. I need to see you, and I trust I shall, to correct my mistakes. Perhaps you have some oracles for me.

HENRY THOREAU.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 2, 1848.

“We must have our bread.” But what is our bread? Is it baker’s bread? Methinks it should be very *home-made* bread. What is our meat? Is it butcher’s meat? What is that which we *must* have? Is that bread which we are now earning sweet? Is it not bread which has been suffered to sour, and then been sweetened with an alkali, which has undergone the vinous, the acetous, and sometimes the putrid fermentation, and then been whitened with vitriol? Is this the bread which we must have? Man must earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, truly, but also by the sweat of his brain within his brow. The body can feed the body only. I have

tasted but little bread in my life. It has been mere grub and provender for the most part. Of bread that nourished the brain and the heart, scarcely any. There is absolutely none on the tables even of the rich.

There is not one kind of food for all men. You must and you will feed those faculties which you exercise. The laborer whose body is weary does not require the same food with the scholar whose brain is weary. Men should not labor foolishly like brutes, but the brain and the body should always, or as much as possible, work and rest together, and then the work will be of such a kind that when the body is hungry the brain will be hungry also, and the same food will suffice for both; otherwise the food which repairs the waste energy of the overwrought body will oppress the sedentary brain, and the degenerate scholar will come to esteem all food vulgar, and all getting a living drudgery.

How shall we earn our bread is a grave question; yet it is a sweet and inviting question. Let us not shirk it, as is usually done. It is the most important and practical question which is put to man. Let us not answer it hastily. Let us not be content to get our bread in some gross, careless, and hasty manner. Some men go a-hunting, some a-fishing, some a-gaming, some to war; but none have so pleasant a time as they who in earnest seek to earn their bread. It is true actually as it is true really; it is true materially as it is true spiritually, that they who seek honestly and sincerely, with all their hearts and lives and strength, to earn their bread, do earn it, and it is sure to be very sweet to them. A very little bread, — a very few crumbs are

enough, if it be of the right quality, for it is infinitely nutritious. Let each man, then, earn at least a crumb of bread for his body before he dies, and know the taste of it, — that it is identical with the bread of life, and that they both go down at one swallow.

Our bread need not ever be sour or hard to digest. What Nature is to the mind she is also to the body. As she feeds my imagination, she will feed my body; for what she says she means, and is ready to do. She is not simply beautiful to the poet's eye. Not only the rainbow and sunset are beautiful, but to be fed and clothed, sheltered and warmed aright, are equally beautiful and inspiring. There is not necessarily any gross and ugly fact which may not be eradicated from the life of man. We should endeavor practically in our lives to correct all the defects which our imagination detects. The heavens are as deep as our aspirations are high. So high as a tree aspires to grow, so high it will find an atmosphere suited to it. Every man should stand for a force which is perfectly irresistible. How can any man be weak who dares *to be* at all? Even the tenderest plants force their way up through the hardest earth and the crevices of rocks; but a man no material power can resist. What a wedge, what a beetle, what a catapult, is an *earnest* man! What can resist him?

It is a momentous fact that a man may be *good*, or he may be *bad*; his life may be *true*, or it may be *false*; it may be either a shame or a glory to him. The good man builds himself up; the bad man destroys himself.

But whatever we do we must do confidently (if we

are timid, let us, then, act timidly), not expecting more light, but having light enough. If we confidently expect more, then let us wait for it. But what is this which we have? Have we not already waited? Is this the beginning of time? Is there a man who does not see clearly beyond, though only a hair's breadth beyond where he at any time stands?

If one hesitates in his path, let him not proceed. Let him respect his doubts, for doubts, too, may have some divinity in them. That we have but little faith is not sad, but that we have but little faithfulness. By faithfulness faith is earned. When, in the progress of a life, a man swerves, though only by an angle infinitely small, from his proper and allotted path (and this is never done quite unconsciously even at first; in fact, that was his broad and scarlet sin, — ah, he knew of it more than he can tell), then the drama of his life turns to tragedy, and makes haste to its fifth act. When once we thus fall behind ourselves, there is no accounting for the obstacles which rise up in our path, and no one is so wise as to advise, and no one so powerful as to aid us while we abide on that ground. Such are cursed with *duties*, and the *neglect of their duties*. For such the decalogue was made, and other far more voluminous and terrible codes.

These departures, — who have not made them? — for they are as faint as the parallax of a fixed star, and at the commencement we say they are nothing, — that is, they originate in a kind of sleep and forgetfulness of the soul when it is naught. A man cannot be too circumspect in order to keep in the straight road, and be

sure that he sees all that he may at any time see, that so he may distinguish his true path.

You ask if there is no doctrine of sorrow in my philosophy. Of acute sorrow I suppose that I know comparatively little. My saddest and most genuine sorrows are apt to be but transient regrets. The place of sorrow is supplied, perchance, by a certain hard and proportionately barren indifference. I am of kin to the sod, and partake largely of its dull patience, — in winter expecting the sun of spring. In my cheapest moments I am apt to think that it is n't my business to be "seeking the spirit," but as much its business to be seeking me. I know very well what Goethe meant when he said that he never had a *chagrin* but he made a poem out of it. I have altogether too much patience of this kind. I am too easily contented with a slight and almost animal happiness. My happiness is a good deal like that of the woodchucks.

Methinks I am never quite committed, never wholly the creature of my moods, but always to some extent their critic. My only integral experience is in my vision. I see, perchance, with more integrity than I feel.

But I need not tell you what manner of man I am, — my virtues or my vices. You can guess if it is worth the while; and I do not discriminate them well.

I do not write this at my hut in the woods. I am at present living with Mrs. Emerson, whose house is an old home of mine, for company during Mr. Emerson's absence.

You will perceive that I am as often talking to myself, perhaps, as speaking to you.

Here is a confession of faith, and a bit of self-portraiture worth having ; for there is little except faithful statement of the fact. Its sentences are based on the questions and experiences of his correspondent; yet they diverge into that atmosphere of humor and hyperbole so native to Thoreau; in whom was the oddest mixture of the serious and the comic, the literal and the romantic. He addressed himself also, so far as his unbending personality would allow, to the mood or the need of his correspondent; and he had great skill in fathoming character and describing in a few touches the persons he encountered; as may be seen in his letters to Emerson, especially, who also had, and in still greater measure, this "fatal gift of penetration," as he once termed it. This will be seen in the contrast of Thoreau's correspondence with Mr. Blake, and that he was holding at the same time with Horace Greeley, — persons radically unlike.

In August, 1846, Thoreau sent to Greeley his essay on Carlyle, asking him to find a place for it in some magazine. Greeley sent it to R. W. Griswold, then editing *Graham's Magazine* in Philadelphia, who accepted it and promised to pay for it, but did not publish it till March and April, 1847; even then the promised payment was not forthcoming. On the 31st of March, 1848, a year and a half after it had been put in Griswold's possession, Thoreau wrote again to Greeley, saying that no money had come to hand. At once, and at the very time when Mr. Blake was opening his spiritual state to Thoreau (April 3, 1848), the busy editor of the *Tribune* replied: "It saddens and sur-

prises me to know that your article was not paid for by Graham; and, since my honor is involved, I will see that you are paid, and that at no distant day." Accordingly, on May 17, he adds: "To-day I have been able to lay my hand on the money due you. I made out a regular bill for the contribution, drew a draft on G. R. Graham for the amount, gave it to his brother in New York for collection, and received the money. I have made Graham pay you seventy-five dollars, but I only send you fifty dollars," having deducted twenty-five dollars for the advance of that sum he had made a month before to Thoreau for his "Ktaadn and the Maine Woods," which finally came out in *Sartain's Union Magazine* of Philadelphia, late in 1848. To this letter and remittance of fifty dollars Thoreau replied, May 19, 1848, substantially thus:—

TO HORACE GREELEY (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, May 19, 1848.

MY FRIEND GREELEY,—I have to-day received from you fifty dollars. It is five years that I have been maintaining myself entirely by manual labor,—not getting a cent from any other quarter or employment. Now this toil has occupied so few days,—perhaps a single month, spring and fall each,—that I must have had more leisure than any of my brethren for study and literature. I have done rude work of all kinds. From July, 1845, to September, 1847, I lived by myself in the forest, in a fairly good cabin, plastered and warmly covered, which I built myself. There I earned all I needed, and kept to my own affairs. During that time

my weekly outlay was but seven and twenty cents; and I had an abundance of all sorts. Unless the human race perspire more than I do, there is no occasion to live by the sweat of their brow. If men cannot get on without money (the smallest amount will suffice), the truest method of earning it is by working as a laborer at one dollar per day. You are least dependent so; I speak as an expert, having used several kinds of labor.

Why should the scholar make a constant complaint that his fate is specially hard? We are too often told of "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties,"—how poets depend on patrons and starve in garrets, or at last go mad and die. Let us hear the other side of the story. Why should not the scholar, if he is really wiser than the multitude, do coarse work now and then? Why not let his greater wisdom enable him to do without things? If you say the wise man is unlucky, how could you distinguish him from the foolishly unfortunate?

My friend, how can I thank you for your kindness? Perhaps there is a better way, — I will convince you that it is felt and appreciated. Here have I been sitting idle, as it were, while you have been busy in my cause, and have done so much for me. I wish you had had a better subject; but good deeds are no less good because their object is unworthy.

Yours was the best way to collect money, — but I should never have thought of it; I might have waylaid the debtor perchance. Even a business man might not have thought of it, — and I cannot be called that, as business is understood usually, — not being familiar

with the routine. But your way has this to commend it also, — if you make the draft, you decide how much to draw. You drew just the sum suitable.

The Ktaadn paper can be put in the guise of letters, if it runs best so; dating each part on the day it describes. Twenty-five dollars more for it will satisfy me; I expected no more, and do not hold you to pay that, — for you asked for something else, and there was delay in sending. So, if you use it, send me twenty-five dollars now or after you sell it, as is most convenient; but take out the expenses that I see you must have had. In such cases carriers generally get the most; but you, as carrier here, get no money, but risk losing some, besides much of your time; while I go away, as I must, giving you unprofitable thanks. Yet trust me, my pleasure in your letter is not wholly a selfish one. May my good genius still watch over me and my added wealth!

P. S. — My book grows in bulk as I work on it; but soon I shall get leisure for those shorter articles you want, — then look out.

The “book,” of course, was the “Week,” then about to go through the press; the shorter articles were some that Greeley suggested for the Philadelphia magazines. Nothing came of this, but the correspondence was kept up until 1854, and led to the partial publication of “Cape Cod” and “The Yankee in Canada” in the newly launched *Putnam's Magazine*, of which G. W. Curtis was editor. But he differed with Thoreau on a matter of style or opinion (the articles appearing as

anonymous, or editorial), and the author withdrew his MS. The letters of Greeley in this entertaining series are all preserved; but Greeley seems to have given Thoreau's away for autographs; and the only one accessible as yet is that just paraphrased.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT MILTON).

CONCORD, August 10, 1849.

MR. BLAKE, — I write now chiefly to say, before it is too late, that I shall be glad to see you in Concord, and will give you a chamber, etc., in my father's house, and as much of my poor company as you can bear.

I am in too great haste this time to speak to your, or out of my, condition. I might say, — you might say, — comparatively speaking, be not anxious to avoid poverty. In this way the wealth of the universe may be securely invested. What a pity if we do not live this short time according to the laws of the long time, — the eternal laws! Let us see that we stand erect here, and do not lie along by our *whole length* in the dirt. Let our meanness be our footstool, not our cushion. In the midst of this labyrinth let us live a *thread* of life. We must act with so rapid and resistless a purpose in *one* direction, that our vices will necessarily trail behind. The nucleus of a comet is almost a star. Was there ever a genuine dilemma? The laws of earth are for the feet, or inferior man; the laws of heaven are for the head, or superior man; the latter are the former sublimed and expanded, even as radii from the earth's centre go on diverging into space. Happy

the man who observes the heavenly and the terrestrial law in just proportion; whose every faculty, from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, obeys the law of its level; who neither stoops nor goes on tiptoe, but lives a balanced life, acceptable to nature and to God.

These things I say; other things I do.

I am sorry to hear that you did not receive my book earlier. I directed it and left it in Munroe's shop to be sent to you immediately, on the twenty-sixth of May, before a copy had been sold.

Will you remember me to Mr. Brown, when you see him next: he is well remembered by

HENRY THOREAU.

I still owe you a worthy answer.

TO HARRISON BLAKE.

CONCORD, November 20, 1849.

MR. BLAKE, — I have not forgotten that I am your debtor. When I read over your letters, as I have just done, I feel that I am unworthy to have received or to answer them, though they are addressed, as I would have them, to the ideal of me. It behooves me, if I would reply, to speak out of the rarest part of myself.

At present I am subsisting on certain wild flavors which nature wafts to me, which unaccountably sustain me, and make my apparently poor life rich. Within a year my walks have extended themselves, and almost every afternoon (I read, or write, or make pencils in the forenoon, and by the last means get a living for my body) I visit some new hill, or pond, or wood, many miles distant. I am astonished at the

wonderful retirement through which I move, rarely meeting a man in these excursions, never seeing one similarly engaged, unless it be my companion, when I have one. I cannot help feeling that of all the human inhabitants of nature hereabouts, only we two have leisure to admire and enjoy our inheritance.

“Free in this world as the birds in the air, disengaged from every kind of chains, those who have practiced the *yoga* gather in Brahma the certain fruit of their works.”

Depend upon it that, rude and careless as I am, I would fain practice the *yoga* faithfully.

“The yogi, absorbed in contemplation, contributes in his degree to creation: he breathes a divine perfume, he hears wonderful things. Divine forms traverse him without tearing him, and, united to the nature which is proper to him, he goes, he acts as animating original matter.”

To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a yogi.

I know little about the affairs of Turkey, but I am sure that I know something about barberries and chestnuts, of which I have collected a store this fall. When I go to see my neighbor, he will formally communicate to me the latest news from Turkey, which he read in yesterday's mail, — “Now Turkey by this time looks determined, and Lord Palmerston” — Why, I would rather talk of the bran, which, unfortunately, was sifted out of my bread this morning, and thrown away. It is a fact which lies nearer to me. The newspaper gossip with which our hosts abuse our ears is as far from a

true hospitality as the viands which they set before us. We did not need them to feed our bodies, and the news can be bought for a penny. We want the inevitable news, be it sad or cheering, wherefore and by what means they are extant this *new* day. If they are well, let them whistle and dance; if they are dyspeptic, it is their duty to complain, that so they may in any case be *entertaining*. If words were invented to conceal thought, I think that newspapers are a great improvement on a bad invention. Do not suffer your life to be taken by newspapers.

I thank you for your hearty appreciation of my book. I am glad to have had such a long talk with you, and that you had patience to listen to me to the end. I think that I had the advantage of you, for I chose my own mood, and in one sense your mood too, — that is, a quiet and attentive reading mood. Such advantage has the writer over the talker. I am sorry that you did not come to Concord in your vacation. Is it not time for another vacation? I am here yet, and Concord is here.

You will have found out by this time who it is that writes this, and will be glad to have you write to him, without his subscribing himself

HENRY D. THOREAU.

P. S. — It is so long since I have seen you, that, as you will perceive, I have to speak, as it were, *in vacuo*, as if I were sounding hollowly for an echo, and it did not make much odds what kind of a sound I made. But the gods do not hear any rude or discordant sound,

as we learn from the echo; and I know that the nature toward which I launch these sounds is so rich that it will modulate anew and wonderfully improve my rudest strain.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT MILTON).

CONCORD, April 3, 1850.

MR. BLAKE, — I thank you for your letter, and I will endeavor to record some of the thoughts which it suggests, whether pertinent or not. You speak of poverty and dependence. Who are poor and dependent? Who are rich and independent? When was it that men agreed to respect the appearance and not the reality? Why should the appearance *appear*? Are we well acquainted, then, with the reality? There is none who does not lie hourly in the respect he pays to false appearance. How sweet it would be to treat men and things, for an hour, for just what they are! We wonder that the sinner does not confess his sin. When we are weary with travel, we lay down our load and rest by the wayside. So, when we are weary with the burden of life, why do we not lay down this load of falsehoods which we have volunteered to sustain, and be refreshed as never mortal was? Let the beautiful laws prevail. Let us not weary ourselves by resisting them. When we would rest our bodies we cease to support them; we recline on the lap of earth. So, when we would rest our spirits, we must recline on the Great Spirit. Let things alone; let them weigh what they will; let them soar or fall. To succeed in letting only one thing alone in a winter morning, if it be only one poor frozen-

thawed apple that hangs on a tree, what a glorious achievement! Methinks it lightens through the dusky universe. What an infinite wealth we have discovered! God reigns, *i. e.*, when we take a liberal view, — when a liberal view is presented us.

Let God alone if need be. Methinks, if I loved him more, I should keep him — I should keep myself rather — at a more respectful distance. It is not when I am going to meet him, but when I am just turning away and leaving him alone, that I discover that God is. I say, God. I am not sure that that is the name. You will know whom I mean.

If for a moment we make way with our petty selves, wish no ill to anything, apprehend no ill, cease to be but as the crystal which reflects a ray, — what shall we not reflect! What a universe will appear crystallized and radiant around us!

I should say, let the Muse lead the Muse, — let the understanding lead the understanding, though in any case it is the farthest forward which leads them both. If the Muse accompany, she is no muse, but an amusement. The Muse should lead like a star which is very far off; but that does not imply that we are to follow foolishly, falling into sloughs and over precipices, for it is not foolishness, but understanding, which is to follow, which the Muse is appointed to lead, as a fit guide of a fit follower?

Will you live? or will you be embalmed? Will you live, though it be astride of a sunbeam; or will you repose safely in the catacombs for a thousand years? In the former case, the worst accident that can happen

is that you may break your neck. Will you break your heart, your soul, to save your neck? Necks and pipe-stems are fated to be broken. Men make a great ado about the folly of demanding too much of life (or of eternity?), and of endeavoring to live according to that demand. It is much ado about nothing. No harm ever came from that quarter. I am not afraid that I shall exaggerate the value and significance of life, but that I shall not be up to the occasion which it is. I shall be sorry to remember that I was there, but noticed nothing remarkable, — not so much as a prince in disguise; lived in the golden age a hired man; visited Olympus even, but fell asleep after dinner, and did not hear the conversation of the gods. I lived in Judæa eighteen hundred years ago, but I never knew that there was such a one as Christ among my contemporaries! If there is anything more glorious than a congress of men a-framing or amending of a constitution going on, which I suspect there is, I desire to see the morning papers. I am greedy of the faintest rumor, though it were got by listening at the keyhole. I will dissipate myself in that direction.

I am glad to know that you find what I have said on Friendship worthy of attention. I wish that I could have the benefit of your criticism; it would be a rare help to me. Will you not communicate it?

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT MILTON).

CONCORD, May 28, 1850.

MR. BLAKE, — “I never found any contentment in the life which the newspapers record,” — anything of

more value than the cent which they cost. Contentment in being covered with dust an inch deep! We who walk the streets, and hold time together, are but the refuse of ourselves, and that life is for the shells of us, — of our body and our mind, — for our scurf, — a thoroughly *scurvy* life. It is coffee made of coffee-grounds the twentieth time, which was only coffee the first time, — while the living water leaps and sparkles by our doors. I know some who, in their charity, give their coffee-grounds to the poor! We, demanding news, and putting up with *such* news! Is it a new convenience, or a new accident, or, rather, a new perception of the truth that we want!

You say that “the serene hours in which friendship, books, nature, thought, seem alone primary considerations, visit you but faintly.” Is not the attitude of expectation somewhat divine? — a sort of home-made divineness? Does it not compel a kind of sphere-music to attend on it? And do not its satisfactions merge at length, by insensible degrees, in the enjoyment of the thing expected?

What if I should forget to write about my not writing? It is not worth the while to make that a theme. It is as if I had written every day. It is as if I had never written before. I wonder that you think so much about it, for not writing is the most like writing, in my case, of anything I know.

Why will you not relate to me your dream? That would be to realize it somewhat. You tell me that you dream, but not what you dream. I can *guess* what comes to pass. So do the frogs dream. Would that I

knew what. I have never found out whether they are awake or asleep, — whether it is day or night with them.

I am preaching, mind you, to bare walls, that is, to myself; and if you have chanced to come in and occupy a pew, do not think that my remarks are directed at you particularly, and so slam the seat in disgust. This discourse was written long before these exciting times.

Some absorbing employment on your higher ground, — your upland farm, — whither no cart-path leads, but where you mount alone with your hoe, — where the life everlasting grows; there you raise a crop which needs not to be brought down into the valley to a market; which you barter for heavenly products.

Do you separate distinctly enough the support of your body from that of your essence? By how distinct a course commonly are these two ends attained! Not that they should not be attained by one and the same means, — that, indeed, is the rarest success, — but there is no half and half about it.

I shall be glad to read my lecture to a small audience in Worcester such as you describe, and will only require that my expenses be paid. If only the parlor be large enough for an echo, and the audience will embarrass themselves with hearing as much as the lecturer would otherwise embarrass himself with reading. But I warn you that this is no better calculated for a promiscuous audience than the last two which I read to you. It requires, in every sense, a concordant audience.

I will come on next Saturday and spend Sunday with you if you wish it. Say so if you do.

“Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

Be not deterred by melancholy on the path which leads to immortal health and joy. When they tasted of the water of the river over which they were to go, they thought it tasted a little bitterish to the palate, but it proved sweeter when it was down.

H. D. T.

NOTE. — The “companion” of his walks, mentioned by Thoreau in November, 1849, was Ellery Channing; the neighbor who insisted on talking of Turkey was perhaps Emerson, who, after his visit to Europe in 1848, was more interested in its politics than before. Pencil-making was Thoreau’s manual work for many years; and it must have been about this time (1849–53) that he “had occasion to go to New York to peddle some pencils,” as he says in his journal for November 20, 1853. He adds, “I was obliged to manufacture one thousand dollars’ worth of pencils, and slowly dispose of, and finally sacrifice them, in order to pay an assumed debt of one hundred dollars.” This debt was for the printing of the *Week*, published in 1849, and finally paid for in 1855. Thoreau’s pencils have sold (in 1893) for 25 cents each. For other facts concerning his debt to James Munroe, see Sanborn’s *Thoreau*, pp. 230, 235.

III

FRIENDS AND FOLLOWERS

TO R. W. EMERSON¹ (AT CONCORD).

FIRE ISLAND BEACH,
Thursday morning, July 25, 1850.

DEAR FRIEND, — I am writing this at the house of Smith Oakes, within one mile of the wreck. He is the one who rendered most assistance. William H. Channing came down with me, but I have not seen Arthur Fuller, nor Greeley, nor Marcus Spring. Spring and Charles Sumner were here yesterday, but left soon. Mr. Oakes and wife tell me (all the survivors came, or were brought, directly to their house) that the ship struck at ten minutes after four A. M., and all hands, being mostly in their nightclothes, made haste to the forecastle, the water coming in at once. There they remained; the passengers *in* the forecastle, the crew above it, doing what they could. Every wave lifted the forecastle roof and washed over those within. The first man got ashore at nine; many from nine to noon. At flood-tide, about half past three o'clock, when the ship

¹ It will readily be seen that this letter relates to the shipwreck on Fire Island, near New York, in which Margaret Fuller, Countess Ossoli, with her husband and child, was lost. A letter with no date of the year, but probably written February 15, 1840, from Emerson to Thoreau, represents them both as taking much trouble about a house in Concord for Mrs. Fuller, the mother of Margaret, who had just sold her Groton house, and wished to live with her daughter near Emerson.

broke up entirely, they came out of the forecastle, and Margaret sat with her back to the foremast, with her hands on her knees, her husband and child already drowned. A great wave came and washed her aft. The steward (?) had just before taken her child and started for shore. Both were drowned.

The broken desk, in a bag, containing no very valuable papers; a large black leather trunk, with an upper and under compartment, the upper holding books and papers; a carpetbag, probably Ossoli's, and one of his shoes (?) are all the Ossoli effects known to have been found. Four bodies remain to be found: the two Ossolis, Horace Sumner, and a sailor. I have visited the child's grave. Its body will probably be taken away to-day. The wreck is to be sold at auction, excepting the hull, to-day.

The mortar would not go off. Mrs. Hasty, the captain's wife, told Mrs. Oakes that she and Margaret divided their money, and tied up the halves in handkerchiefs around their persons; that Margaret took sixty or seventy dollars. Mrs. Hasty, who can tell all about Margaret up to eleven o'clock on Friday, is said to be going to Portland, New England, to-day. She and Mrs. Fuller must, and probably will, come together. The cook, the last to leave, and the steward (?) will know the rest. I shall try to see them. In the meanwhile I shall do what I can to recover property and obtain particulars hereabouts. William H. Channing — did I write it? — has come with me. Arthur Fuller¹

¹ Rev. A. B. Fuller, then of Manchester, N. H., afterward of Boston; a brother of Margaret, who died a chaplain in the Civil War.

has this moment reached the house. He reached the beach last night. We got here yesterday noon. A good part of the wreck still holds together where she struck, and something may come ashore with her fragments. The last body was found on Tuesday, three miles west. Mrs. Oakes dried the papers which were in the trunk, and she says they appeared to be of various kinds. "Would they cover that table?" (a small round one). "They would if spread out. Some were tied up." There were twenty or thirty books "in the same half of the trunk. Another smaller trunk, empty, came ashore, but there was no mark on it." She speaks of Paulina as if she might have been a sort of nurse to the child. I expect to go to Patchogue, whence the pilferers must have chiefly come, and advertise, etc.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (IN MILTON).

CONCORD August 9, 1850.

MR. BLAKE, — I received your letter just as I was rushing to Fire Island beach to recover what remained of Margaret Fuller, and read it on the way. That event and its train, as much as anything, have prevented my answering it before. It is wisest to speak when you are spoken to. I will now endeavor to reply, at the risk of having nothing to say.

I find that actual events, notwithstanding the singular prominence which we all allow them, are far less real than the creations of my imagination. They are truly visionary and insignificant, — all that we commonly call life and death, — and affect me less than my dreams. This petty stream which from time to time swells and

carries away the mills and bridges of our habitual life, and that mightier stream or ocean on which we securely float, — what makes the difference between them? I have in my pocket a button which I ripped off the coat of the Marquis of Ossoli, on the seashore, the other day. Held up, it intercepts the light, — an actual button, — and yet all the life it is connected with is less substantial to me, and interests me less, than my faintest dream. Our thoughts are the epochs in our lives: all else is but as a journal of the winds that blew while we were here.

I say to myself, Do a little more of that work which you have confessed to be good. You are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with yourself, without reason. Have you not a thinking faculty of inestimable value? If there is an experiment which you would like to try, try it. Do not entertain doubts if they are not agreeable to you. Remember that you need not eat unless you are hungry. Do not read the newspapers. Improve every opportunity to be melancholy. As for health, consider yourself well. Do not engage to find things as you think they are. Do what nobody else can do for you. Omit to do anything else. It is not easy to make our lives respectable by any course of activity. We must repeatedly withdraw into our shells of thought, like the tortoise, somewhat helplessly; yet there is more than philosophy in that.

Do not waste any reverence on my attitude. I merely manage to sit up where I have dropped. I am sure that my acquaintances mistake me. They ask my advice on high matters, but they do not know even how poorly

on 't I am for hats and shoes. I have hardly a shift. Just as shabby as I am in my outward apparel, ay, and more lamentably shabby, am I in my inward substance. If I should turn myself inside out, my rags and meanness would indeed appear. I am something to him that made me, undoubtedly, but not much to any other that he has made.

Would it not be worth while to discover nature in Milton? be native to the universe? I, too, love Concord best, but I am glad when I discover, in oceans and wildernesses far away, the material of a million Concords: indeed, I am lost, unless I discover them. I see less difference between a city and a swamp than formerly. It is a swamp, however, too dismal and dreary even for me, and I should be glad if there were fewer owls, and frogs, and mosquitoes in it. I prefer ever a more cultivated place, free from miasma and crocodiles. I am so sophisticated, and I will take my choice.

As for missing friends, — what if we do miss one another? have we not agreed on a rendezvous? While each wanders his own way through the wood, without anxiety, ay, with serene joy, though it be on his hands and knees, over rocks and fallen trees, he cannot but be in the right way. There is no wrong way to him. How can he be said to miss his friend, whom the fruits still nourish and the elements sustain? A man who missed his friend at a turn, went on buoyantly, dividing the friendly air, and humming a tune to himself, ever and anon kneeling with delight to study each little lichen in his path, and scarcely made three miles a day

for friendship. As for conforming outwardly, and living your own life inwardly, I do not think much of that. Let not your right hand know what your left hand does in that line of business. It will prove a failure. Just as successfully can you walk against a sharp steel edge which divides you cleanly right and left. Do you wish to try your ability to resist distension? It is a greater strain than any soul can long endure. When you get God to pulling one way, and the devil the other, each having his feet well braced, — to say nothing of the conscience sawing transversely, — almost any timber will give way.

I do not dare invite you earnestly to come to Concord, because I know too well that the berries are not thick in my fields, and we should have to take it out in viewing the landscape. But come, on every account, and we will see — one another.

No letters of the year 1851 have been found by me. On the 27th of December, 1850, Mr. Cabot wrote to say that the Boston Society of Natural History, of which he was secretary, had elected Thoreau a corresponding member, “with all the *honores, privilegia, etc., ad gradum tuum pertinentia*, without the formality of paying any entrance fee, or annual subscription. Your duties in return are to advance the interests of the Society by communications or otherwise, as shall seem good.” This is believed to be the only learned body which honored itself by electing Thoreau. The immediate occasion of this election was the present, by Thoreau, to the Society, of a fine specimen of the American gos-

hawk, caught or shot by Jacob Farmer, which Mr. Cabot acknowledged, December 18, 1849, saying: "It was first described by Wilson; lately Audubon has identified it with the European goshawk, thereby committing a very flagrant blunder. It is usually a very rare species with us. The European bird is used in hawking; and doubtless ours would be equally *game*. If Mr. Farmer skins him now, he will have to take second cut; for his skin is already off and stuffed,—his remains dissected, measured, and deposited in alcohol."

TO T. W. HIGGINSON (AT BOSTON).

CONCORD, April 2-3, 1852.

DEAR SIR, — I do not see that I can refuse to read another lecture, but what makes me hesitate is the fear that I have not another available which will *entertain* a large audience, though I have thoughts to offer which I think will be quite as worthy of their attention. However, I will try; for the prospect of earning a few dollars is alluring. As far as I can foresee, my subject would be "Reality" rather transcendently treated. It lies still in "Walden, or Life in the Woods." Since you are kind enough to undertake the arrangements, I will leave it to you to name an evening of next week, decide on the most suitable room, and advertise,—if this is not taking you too literally at your word.

If you still think it worth the while to attend to this, will you let me know as soon as may be what evening will be most convenient? I certainly do not feel prepared to offer myself as a lecturer to the Boston *public*, and hardly know whether more to dread a small

audience or a large one. Nevertheless, I will repress this squeamishness, and propose no alteration in your arrangements. I shall be glad to accept your invitation to tea.

This lecture was given, says Colonel Higginson, "at the Mechanics' Apprentices Library in Boston, with the snow outside, and the young boys rustling their newspapers among the Alcotts and Blakes." Or, possibly, this remark may apply to a former lecture in the same year, which was that in which Thoreau first lectured habitually away from Concord. He commenced by accepting an invitation to speak at Leyden Hall, in Plymouth, where his friends the Watsons had organized Sunday services, that the Transcendentalists and Abolitionists might have a chance to be heard at a time when they were generally excluded from the popular "Lyceum courses" throughout New England. Mr. B. M. Watson says:—

"I have found two letters from Thoreau in answer to my invitation in 1852 to address our congregation at Leyden Hall on Sunday mornings, — an enterprise I undertook about that time. I find among the distinguished men who addressed us the names of Thoreau, Emerson, Ellery Channing, Alcott, Higginson, Remond, S. Johnson, F. J. Appleton, Edmund Quincy, Garrison, Phillips, J. P. Lesley, Shackford, W. F. Channing, N. H. Whiting, Adin Ballou, Abby K. Foster and her husband, J. T. Sargent, T. T. Stone, Jones Very, Wasson, Hurlbut, F. W. Holland, and Scherb; so you may depend we had some fun."

These letters were mere notes. The first, dated February 17, 1852, says: "I have not yet seen Mr. Channing, though I believe he is in town, — having decided to come to Plymouth myself, — but I will let him know that he is expected. Mr. Daniel Foster wishes me to say that he accepts your invitation, and that he would like to come Sunday after next. I will take the Saturday afternoon train. I shall be glad to get a winter view of Plymouth Harbor, and see where your garden lies under the snow."

The second letter follows:—

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, December 31, 1852.

MR. WATSON, — I would be glad to visit Plymouth again, but at present I have nothing to read which is not severely heathenish, or at least secular, — which the dictionary defines as "relating to affairs of the present world, not holy," — though not necessarily unholy; nor have I any leisure to prepare it. My writing at present is profane, yet in a good sense, and, as it were, sacredly, I may say; for, finding the air of the temple too close, I sat outside. Don't think I say this to get off; no, no! It will not do to read such things to hungry ears. "If they ask for bread, will you give them a stone?" When I have something of the right kind, depend upon it I will let you know.

Up to 1848, when he was invited to lecture before the Salem Lyceum by Nathaniel Hawthorne, then its secretary, Thoreau seems to have spoken publicly very

little except in Concord; nor did he extend the circuit of his lectures much until his two books had made him known as a thinker. There was little to attract a popular audience in his manner or his matter; but it was the era of lectures, and if one could once gain admission to the circle of "lyceum lecturers," it did not so much matter what he said; a lecture was a lecture, as a sermon was a sermon, good, bad, or indifferent. But it was common to exclude the antislavery speakers from the lyceums, even those of more eloquence than Thoreau; this led to invitations from the small band of reformers scattered about New England and New York, so that the most unlikely of platform speakers (Ellery Channing, for example) sometimes gave lectures at Plymouth, Greenfield, Newburyport, or elsewhere. The present fashion of parlor lectures had not come in; yet at Worcester Thoreau's friends early organized for him something of that kind, as his letters to Mr. Blake show. In default of an audience of numbers, Thoreau fell into the habit of lecturing in his letters to this friend; the most marked instance being the thoughtful essay on Love and Chastity which makes the bulk of his epistle dated September, 1852. Like most of his serious writing, this was made up from his daily journal, and hardly comes under the head of "familiar letters;" the didactic purpose is rather too apparent. Yet it cannot be spared from any collection of his epistles, — none of which flowed more directly from the quickened moral nature of the man.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT BANGOR).

CONCORD, July 13, 1852.

DEAR SOPHIA, — I am a miserable letter-writer, but perhaps if I should say this at length and with sufficient emphasis and regret it would make a letter. I am sorry that nothing transpires here of much moment; or, I should rather say, that I am so slackened and rusty, like the telegraph wire this season, that no wind that blows can extract music from me.

I am not on the trail of any elephants or mastodons, but have succeeded in trapping only a few ridiculous mice, which cannot feed my imagination. I have become sadly scientific. I would rather come upon the vast valley-like “spoor” only of some celestial beast which this world’s woods can no longer sustain, than spring my net over a bushel of moles. You must do better in those woods where you are. You must have some adventures to relate and repeat for years to come, which will eclipse even mother’s voyage to Goldsborough and Sissiboo.

They say that Mr. Pierce, the presidential candidate, was in town last 5th of July, visiting Hawthorne, whose college chum he was; and that Hawthorne is writing a life of him, for electioneering purposes.

Concord is just as idiotic as ever in relation to the spirits and their knockings. Most people here believe in a spiritual world which no respectable junk bottle, which had not met with a slip, would condescend to contain even a portion of for a moment, — whose atmosphere would extinguish a candle let down into it, like

a well that wants airing; in spirits which the very bull-frogs in our meadows would blackball. Their evil genius is seeing how low it can degrade them. The hooting of owls, the croaking of frogs, is celestial wisdom in comparison. If I could be brought to believe in the things which they believe, I should make haste to get rid of my certificate of stock in this and the next world's enterprises, and buy a share in the first Immediate Annihilation Company that offered. I would exchange my immortality for a glass of small beer this hot weather. Where *are* the heathen? Was there ever any superstition before? And yet I suppose there may be a vessel this very moment setting sail from the coast of North America to that of Africa with a missionary on board! Consider the dawn and the sunrise, — the rainbow and the evening, — the words of Christ and the aspiration of all the saints! Hear music! see, smell, taste, feel, hear, — anything, — and then hear these idiots, inspired by the cracking of a restless board, humbly asking, "Please, Spirit, if you cannot answer by knocks, answer by tips of the table." ! ! ! ! ! ! !

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, July 21, 1852.

MR. BLAKE, — I am too stupidly well these days to write to you. My life is almost altogether outward, — all shell and no tender kernel; so that I fear the report of it would be only a nut for you to crack, with no meat in it for you to eat. Moreover, you have not cornered me up, and I enjoy such large liberty in writing to you, that I feel as vague as the air. However, 'r

rejoice to hear that you have attended so patiently to anything which I have said heretofore, and have detected any truth in it. It encourages me to say more, — not in this letter, I fear, but in some book which I may write one day. I am glad to know that I am as much to any mortal as a persistent and consistent scarecrow is to a farmer, — such a bundle of straw in a man's clothing as I am, with a few bits of tin to sparkle in the sun dangling about me, as if I were hard at work there in the field. However, if this kind of life saves any man's corn, — why, he is the gainer. I am not afraid that you will flatter me as long as you know what I am, as well as what I think, or aim to be, and distinguish between these two, for then it will commonly happen that if you praise the last you will condemn the first.

I remember that walk to Asnebumskit very well, — a fit place to go to on a Sunday; one of the true temples of the earth. A temple, you know, was anciently “an open place without a roof,” whose walls served merely to shut out the world and direct the mind toward heaven; but a modern *meeting-house* shuts out the heavens, while it crowds the world into still closer quarters. Best of all is it when, as on a mountain-top, you have for all walls your own elevation and deeps of surrounding ether. The partridge-berries, watered with mountain dews which are gathered there, are more memorable to me than the words which I last heard from the pulpit at least; and for my part, I would rather look toward Rutland than Jerusalem. Rutland, — modern town, — land of ruts, — trivial and worn, —

not too sacred, — with no holy sepulchre, but profane green fields and dusty roads, and opportunity to live as holy a life as you can, — where the sacredness, if there is any, is all in yourself and not in the place.

I fear that your Worcester people do not often enough go to the hilltops, though, as I am told, the springs lie nearer to the surface on your hills than in your valleys. They have the reputation of being Free-Soilers.¹ Do they insist on a free atmosphere, too, that is, on freedom for the head or brain as well as the feet? If I were consciously to join any party, it would be that which is the most free to entertain thought.

All the world complain nowadays of a press of trivial duties and engagements, which prevents their employing themselves on some higher ground they know of; but, undoubtedly, if they were made of the right stuff to work on that higher ground, provided they were released from all those engagements, they would now at once fulfill the superior engagement, and neglect all the rest, as naturally as they breathe. They would never be caught saying that they had no time for this, when the dullest man knows that this is all that he has time for. No man who acts from a sense of duty ever puts the lesser duty above the greater. No man has the desire and the ability to work on high things, but he has also the ability to build himself a high staging.

As for passing *through* any great and glorious experience, and rising *above* it, as an eagle might fly athwart the evening sky to rise into still brighter and fairer regions of the heavens, I cannot say that I ever sailed so

¹ The name of a political party, afterwards called "Republicans."

creditably; but my bark ever seemed thwarted by some side wind, and went off over the edge, and now only occasionally tacks back toward the centre of that sea again. I have outgrown nothing good, but, I do not fear to say, fallen behind by whole continents of virtue, which should have been passed as islands in my course; but I trust — what else can I trust? that, with a stiff wind, some Friday, when I have thrown some of my cargo overboard, I may make up for all that distance lost.

Perchance the time will come when we shall not be content to go back and forth upon a raft to some huge Homeric or Shakespearean Indiaman that lies upon the reef, but build a bark out of that wreck and others that are buried in the sands of this desolate island, and such new timber as may be required, in which to sail away to whole new worlds of light and life, where our friends are.

Write again. There is one respect in which you did not finish your letter: you did not write it with ink, and it is not so good, therefore, against or for you in the eye of the law, nor in the eye of

H. D. T.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

September, 1852.

MR. BLAKE, — Here come the sentences which I promised you. You may keep them, if you will regard and use them as the disconnected fragments of what I may find to be a completer essay, on looking over my journal, at last, and may claim again.

I send you the thoughts on Chastity and Sensuality

with diffidence and shame, not knowing how far I speak to the condition of men generally, or how far I betray my peculiar defects. Pray enlighten me on this point if you can.

LOVE.

What the essential difference between man and woman is, that they should be thus attracted to one another, no one has satisfactorily answered. Perhaps we must acknowledge the justness of the distinction which assigns to man the sphere of wisdom, and to woman that of love, though neither belongs exclusively to either. Man is continually saying to woman, Why will you not be more wise? Woman is continually saying to man, Why will you not be more loving? It is not in their wills to be wise or to be loving; but, unless each is both wise and loving, there can be neither wisdom nor love.

All transcendent goodness is one, though appreciated in different ways, or by different senses. In beauty we see it, in music we hear it, in fragrance we scent it, in the palatable the pure palate tastes it, and in rare health the whole body feels it. The variety is in the surface or manifestation; but the radical identity we fail to express. The lover sees in the glance of his beloved the same beauty that in the sunset paints the western skies. It is the same daimon, here lurking under a human eyelid, and there under the closing eyelids of the day. Here, in small compass, is the ancient and natural beauty of evening and morning. What loving astronomer has ever fathomed the ethereal depths of the eye?

The maiden conceals a fairer flower and sweeter fruit than any calyx in the field; and, if she goes with averted face, confiding in her purity and high resolves, she will make the heavens retrospective, and all nature dumbly confess its queen.

Under the influence of this sentiment, man is a string of an æolian harp, which vibrates with the zephyrs of the eternal morning.

There is at first thought something trivial in the commonness of love. So many Indian youths and maidens along these banks have in ages past yielded to the influence of this great civilizer. Nevertheless, this generation is not disgusted nor discouraged, for love is no individual's experience; and though we are imperfect mediums, it does not partake of our imperfection; though we are finite, it is infinite and eternal; and the same divine influence broods over these banks, whatever race may inhabit them, and perchance still would, even if the human race did not dwell here.

Perhaps an instinct survives through the intensest actual love, which prevents entire abandonment and devotion, and makes the most ardent lover a little reserved. It is the anticipation of change. For the most ardent lover is not the less practically wise, and seeks a love which will last forever.

Considering how few poetical friendships there are, it is remarkable that so many are married. It would seem as if men yielded too easy an obedience to nature without consulting their genius. One may be drunk with love without being any nearer to finding his mate. There is more of good nature than of good sense at

the bottom of most marriages. But the good nature must have the counsel of the good spirit or Intelligence. If common sense had been consulted, how many marriages would never have taken place ; if uncommon or divine sense, how few marriages such as we witness would ever have taken place!

Our love may be ascending or descending. What is its character, if it may be said of it, —

“We must *respect* the souls above,
But only *those below* we love.”

Love is a severe critic. Hate can pardon more than love. They who aspire to love worthily, subject themselves to an ordeal more rigid than any other.

Is your friend such a one that an increase of worth on your part will surely make her more your friend? Is she retained — is she attracted by more nobleness in you, — by more of that virtue which is peculiarly yours; or is she indifferent and blind to that? Is she to be flattered and won by your meeting her on any other than the ascending path? Then duty requires that you separate from her.

Love must be as much a light as a flame.

Where there is not discernment, the behavior even of the purest soul may in effect amount to coarseness.

A man of fine perceptions is more truly feminine than a merely sentimental woman. The heart is blind; but love is not blind. None of the gods is so discriminating.

In love and friendship the imagination is as much exercised as the heart; and if either is outraged the other will be estranged. It is commonly the imagina-

tion which is wounded first, rather than the heart, — it is so much the more sensitive.

Comparatively, we can excuse any offense against the heart, but not against the imagination. The imagination knows — nothing escapes its glance from out its eyry — and it controls the breast. My heart may still yearn toward the valley, but my imagination will not permit me to jump off the precipice that debars me from it, for it is wounded, its wings are clipt, and it cannot fly, even descendingly. Our “blundering hearts!” some poet says. The imagination never forgets; it is a re-membering. It is not foundationless, but most reasonable, and it alone uses all the knowledge of the intellect.

Love is the profoundest of secrets. Divulged, even to the beloved, it is no longer Love. As if it were merely I that loved you. When love ceases, then it is divulged.

In our intercourse with one we love, we wish to have answered those questions at the end of which we do not raise our voice; against which we put no interrogation-mark, — answered with the same unfailing, universal aim toward every point of the compass.

I require that thou knowest everything without being told anything. I parted from my beloved because there was one thing which I had to tell her. She *questioned* me. She should have known all by sympathy. That I had to tell it her was the difference between us, — the misunderstanding.

A lover never hears anything that he is *told*, for that is commonly either false or stale; but he hears things

taking place, as the sentinels heard Trenck¹ mining in the ground, and thought it was moles.

The relation may be profaned in many ways. The parties may not regard it with equal sacredness. What if the lover should learn that his beloved dealt in incantations and philters! What if he should hear that she consulted a clairvoyant! The spell would be instantly broken.

If to chaffer and higgie are bad in trade, they are much worse in Love. It demands directness as of an arrow.

There is danger that we lose sight of what our friend is absolutely, while considering what she is to us alone.

The lover wants no partiality. He says, Be so kind as to be just.

Canst thou love with thy mind,
And reason with thy heart?
Canst thou be kind,
And from thy darling part?

Canst thou range earth, sea, and air,
And so meet me everywhere?
Through all events I will pursue thee,
Through all persons I will woo thee.

I need thy hate as much as thy love. Thou wilt not repel me entirely when thou repellest what is evil in me.

Indeed, indeed, I cannot tell,
Though I ponder on it well,
Which were easier to state,
All my love or all my hate.
Surely, surely, thou wilt trust me
When I say thou doth disgust me.

¹ Baron Trenck, the famous prisoner.

O, I hate thee with a hate
That would fain annihilate;
Yet, sometimes, against my will,
My dear Friend, I love thee still.
It were treason to our love,
And a sin to God above,
One iota to abate
Of a pure, impartial hate.

It is not enough that we are truthful; we must cherish and carry out high purposes to be truthful about.

It must be rare, indeed, that we meet with one to whom we are prepared to be quite ideally related, as she to us. We should have no reserve; we should give the whole of ourselves to that society; we should have no duty aside from that. One who could bear to be so wonderfully and beautifully exaggerated every day. I would take my friend out of her low self and set her higher, infinitely higher, and *there* know her. But, commonly, men are as much afraid of love as of hate. They have lower engagements. They have near ends to serve. They have not imagination enough to be thus employed about a human being, but must be cooping a barrel, forsooth.

What a difference, whether, in all your walks, you meet only strangers, or in one house is one who knows you, and whom you know. To have a brother or a sister! To have a gold mine on your farm! To find diamonds in the gravel heaps before your door! How rare these things are! To share the day with you, — to people the earth. Whether to have a god or a goddess for companion in your walks, or to walk alone with hinds and villains and carles. Would not a friend en-

hance the beauty of the landscape as much as a deer or hare? Everything would acknowledge and serve such a relation; the corn in the field, and the cranberries in the meadow. The flowers would bloom, and the birds sing, with a new impulse. There would be more fair days in the year.

The object of love expands and grows before us to eternity, until it includes all that is lovely, and we become all that can love.

CHASTITY AND SENSUALITY.

The subject of sex is a remarkable one, since, though its phenomena concern us so much, both directly and indirectly, and, sooner or later, it occupies the thoughts of all, yet all mankind, as it were, agree to be silent about it, at least the sexes commonly one to another. One of the most interesting of all human facts is veiled more completely than any mystery. It is treated with such secrecy and awe as surely do not go to any religion. I believe that it is unusual even for the most intimate friends to communicate the pleasures and anxieties connected with this fact, — much as the external affair of love, its comings and goings, are bruited. The Shakers do not exaggerate it so much by their manner of speaking of it as all mankind by their manner of keeping silence about it. Not that men should speak on this or any subject without having anything worthy to say; but it is plain that the education of man has hardly commenced, — there is so little genuine intercommunication.

In a pure society, the subject of marriage would not

be so often avoided, — from shame and not from reverence, winked out of sight, and hinted at only; but treated naturally and simply, — perhaps simply avoided, like the kindred mysteries. If it cannot be spoken of for shame, how can it be acted of? But, doubtless, there is far more purity, as well as more impurity, than is apparent.

Men commonly couple with their idea of marriage a slight degree at least of sensuality; but every lover, the world over, believes in its inconceivable purity.

If it is the result of a pure love, there can be nothing sensual in marriage. Chastity is something positive, not negative. It is the virtue of the married especially. All lusts or base pleasures must give place to loftier delights. They who meet as superior beings cannot perform the deeds of inferior ones. The deeds of love are less questionable than any action of an individual can be, for, it being founded on the rarest mutual respect, the parties incessantly stimulate each other to a loftier and purer life, and the act in which they are associated must be pure and noble indeed, for innocence and purity can have no equal. In this relation we deal with one whom we respect more religiously even than we respect our better selves, and we shall necessarily conduct as in the presence of God. What presence can be more awful to the lover than the presence of his beloved?

If you seek the warmth even of affection from a similar motive to that from which cats and dogs and slothful persons hug the fire, — because your temperature is low through sloth, — you are on the downward

road, and it is but to plunge yet deeper into sloth. Better the cold affection of the sun, reflected from fields of ice and snow, or his warmth in some still, wintry dell. The warmth of celestial love does not relax, but nerves and braces its enjoyer. Warm your body by healthful exercise, not by cowering over a stove. Warm your spirit by performing independently noble deeds, not by ignobly seeking the sympathy of your fellows who are no better than yourself. A man's social and spiritual discipline must answer to his corporeal. He must lean on a friend who has a hard breast, as he would lie on a hard bed. He must drink cold water for his only beverage. So he must not hear sweetened and colored words, but pure and refreshing truths. He must daily bathe in truth cold as spring water, not warmed by the sympathy of friends.

Can love be in aught allied to dissipation? Let us love by refusing, not accepting one another. Love and lust are far asunder. The one is good, the other bad. When the affectionate sympathize by their higher natures, there is love; but there is danger that they will sympathize by their lower natures, and then there is lust. It is not necessary that this be deliberate, hardly even conscious; but, in the close contact of affection, there is danger that we may stain and pollute one another; for we cannot embrace but with an entire embrace.

We must love our friend so much that she shall be associated with our purest and holiest thoughts alone. When there is impurity, we have "descended to meet," though we knew it not.

The *luxury* of affection, — there's the danger. There must be some nerve and heroism in our love, as of a winter morning. In the religion of all nations a purity is hinted at, which, I fear, men never attain to. We may love and not elevate one another. The love that takes us as it finds us degrades us. What watch we must keep over the fairest and purest of our affections, lest there be some taint about them! May we so love as never to have occasion to repent of our love!

There is to be attributed to sensuality the loss to language of how many pregnant symbols! Flowers, which, by their infinite hues and fragrance, celebrate the marriage of the plants, are intended for a symbol of the open and unsuspected beauty of all true marriage, when man's flowering season arrives.

Virginity, too, is a budding flower, and by an impure marriage the virgin is deflowered. Whoever loves flowers, loves virgins and chastity. Love and lust are as far asunder as a flower-garden is from a brothel.

J. Biberg, in the "*Amoenitates Botanicae*," edited by Linnæus, observes (I translate from the Latin): "The organs of generation, which, in the animal kingdom, are for the most part concealed by nature, as if they were to be ashamed of, in the vegetable kingdom are exposed to the eyes of all; and, when the nuptials of plants are celebrated, it is wonderful what delight they afford to the beholder, refreshing the senses with the most agreeable color and the sweetest odor; and, at the same time, bees and other insects, not to mention the hummingbird, extract honey from their nectaries, and gather wax from their effete pollen." Linnæus

himself calls the calyx the *thalamus*, or bridal chamber; and the corolla the *aulaeum*, or tapestry of it, and proceeds to explain thus every part of the flower.

Who knows but evil spirits might corrupt the flowers themselves, rob them of their fragrance and their fair hues, and turn their marriage into a secret shame and defilement? Already they are of various qualities, and there is one whose nuptials fill the lowlands in June with the odor of carrion.

The intercourse of the sexes, I have dreamed, is incredibly beautiful, too fair to be remembered. I have had thoughts about it, but they are among the most fleeting and irrecoverable in my experience. It is strange that men will talk of miracles, revelation, inspiration, and the like, as things past, while love remains.

A true marriage will differ in no wise from illumination. In all perception of the truth there is a divine ecstasy, an inexpressible delirium of joy, as when a youth embraces his betrothed virgin. The ultimate delights of a true marriage are one with this.

No wonder that, out of such a union, not as end, but as accompaniment, comes the undying race of man. The womb is a most fertile soil.

Some have asked if the stock of men could not be improved, — if they could not be bred as cattle. Let Love be purified, and all the rest will follow. A pure love is thus, indeed, the panacea for all the ills of the world.

The only excuse for reproduction is improvement. Nature abhors repetition. Beasts merely propagate

their kind; but the offspring of noble men and women will be superior to themselves, as their aspirations are. By their fruits ye shall know them.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, February 27, 1853.

MR. BLAKE, — I have not answered your letter before, because I have been almost constantly in the fields surveying of late. It is long since I have spent many days so profitably in a pecuniary sense; so unprofitably, it seems to me, in a more important sense. I have earned just a dollar a day for seventy-six days past; for, though I charge at a higher rate for the days which are seen to be spent, yet so many more are spent than appears. This is instead of lecturing, which has not offered, to pay for that book which I printed.¹ I have not only cheap hours, but cheap weeks and months; that is, weeks which are bought at the rate I have named. Not that they are quite lost to me, or make me very melancholy, alas! for I too often take a cheap satisfaction in so spending them, — weeks of pasturing and browsing, like beeves and deer, — which give me animal health, it may be, but create a tough skin over the soul and intellectual part. Yet, if men should offer my body a maintenance for the work of my head alone, I feel that it would be a dangerous temptation.

As to whether what you speak of as the “world’s way” (which for the most part is my way), or that which is shown me, is the better, the former is imposture, the latter is truth. I have the coldest confidence

¹ *The Week*.

in the last. There is only such hesitation as the appetites feel in following the aspirations. The clod hesitates because it is inert, wants *animation*. The one is the way of death, the other of life everlasting. My hours are not "cheap in such a way that *I* doubt whether the world's way would not have been better," but cheap in such a way that I doubt whether the world's way, which I have adopted for the time, could be worse. The whole enterprise of this nation, which is not an upward, but a westward one, toward Oregon, California, Japan, etc., is totally devoid of interest to me, whether performed on foot, or by a Pacific railroad. It is not illustrated by a thought; it is not warmed by a sentiment; there is nothing in it which one should lay down his life for, nor even his gloves, — hardly which one should take up a newspaper for. It is perfectly heathenish, — a filibustering *toward* heaven by the great western route. No; they may go their way to their manifest destiny, which I trust is not mine. May my seventy-six dollars, whenever I get them, help to carry me in the other direction! I see them on their winding way, but no music is wafted from their host, — only the rattling of change in their pockets. I would rather be a captive knight, and let them all pass by, than be free only to go whither they are bound. What end do they propose to themselves beyond Japan? What aims more lofty have they than the prairie dogs?

As it respects these things, I have not changed an opinion one iota from the first. As the stars looked to me when I was a shepherd in Assyria, they look to me now, a New-Englander. The higher the mountain

on which you stand, the less change in the prospect from year to year, from age to age. Above a certain height there is no change. I am a Switzer on the edge of the glacier, with his advantages and disadvantages, goitre, or what not. (You may suspect it to be some kind of swelling at any rate.) I have had but one *spirital* birth (excuse the word), and now whether it rains or snows, whether I laugh or cry, fall farther below or approach nearer to my standard; whether Pierce or Scott is elected, — not a new scintillation of light flashes on me, but ever and anon, though with longer intervals, the same surprising and everlastingly new light dawns to me, with only such variations as in the coming of the natural day, with which, indeed, it is often coincident.

As to how to preserve potatoes from rotting, your opinion may change from year to year; but as to how to preserve your soul from rotting, I have nothing to learn, but something to practice.

Thus I declaim against them; but I in my folly am the world I condemn.

I very rarely, indeed, if ever, “feel any itching to be what is called useful to my fellow-men.” Sometimes — it may be when my thoughts for want of employment fall into a beaten path or humdrum — I have dreamed idly of stopping a man’s horse that was running away; but, perchance, I wished that he might run, in order that I might stop him; — or of putting out a fire; but then, of course, it must have got well a-going. Now, to tell the truth, I do not dream much of acting upon horses before they run, or of preventing fires which are not yet kindled. What a foul subject is this of doing good!

instead of minding one's life, which should be his business; doing good as a dead carcass, which is only fit for manure, instead of as a living man, — instead of taking care to flourish, and smell and taste sweet, and refresh all mankind to the extent of our capacity and quality. People will sometimes try to persuade you that you have done something from that motive, as if you did not already know enough about it. If I ever *did* a man any good, in their sense, of course it was something exceptional and insignificant compared with the good or evil which I am constantly doing by being what I am. As if you were to preach to ice to shape itself into burning-glasses, which are sometimes useful, and so the peculiar properties of ice be lost. Ice that merely performs the office of a burning-glass does not do its duty.

The problem of life becomes, one cannot say by how many degrees, more complicated as our material wealth is increased, — whether that needle they tell of was a gateway or not, — since the problem is not merely nor mainly to get life for our bodies, but by this or a similar discipline to get life for our souls; by cultivating the lowland farm on right principles, that is, with this view, to turn it into an upland farm. You have so many more talents to account for. If I accomplish as much more in spiritual work as I am richer in worldly goods, then I am just as worthy, or worth just as much, as I was before, and no more. I see that, in my own case, money *might* be of great service to me, but probably it would not be; for the difficulty now is, that I do not improve my opportunities, and therefore I am not

prepared to have my opportunities increased. Now, I warn you, if it be as you say, you have got to put on the pack of an upland farmer in good earnest the coming spring, the lowland farm being cared for; ay, you must be selecting your seeds forthwith, and doing what winter work you can; and, while others are raising potatoes and Baldwin apples for you, you must be raising apples of the Hesperides for them. (Only hear how he preaches!) No man can suspect that he is the proprietor of an upland farm, — upland in the sense that it will produce nobler crops, and better repay cultivation in the long run, — but he will be perfectly sure that he ought to cultivate it.

Though we are desirous to earn our bread, we need not be anxious to *satisfy* men for it, — though we shall take care to pay them, — but God, who alone gave it to us. Men may in effect put us in the debtors' jail for that matter, simply for paying our whole debt to God, which includes our debt to them, and though we have His receipt for it, — for His paper is dishonored. The cashier will tell you that He has no stock in his bank.

How prompt we are to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our bodies; how slow to satisfy the hunger and thirst of our *souls*! Indeed, we would-be practical folks cannot use this word without blushing because of our infidelity, having starved this substance almost to a shadow. We feel it to be as absurd as if a man were to break forth into a eulogy on *his dog*, who has n't any. An ordinary man will work every day for a year at shoveling dirt to support his body, or a family of bodies; but he is an extraordinary man who will

work a whole day in a year for the support of his soul. Even the priests, the men of God, so called, for the most part confess that they work for the support of the body. But he alone is the truly enterprising and practical man who succeeds in *maintaining* his soul here. Have not we our everlasting life to get? and is not that the only excuse at last for eating, drinking, sleeping, or even carrying an umbrella when it rains? A man might as well devote himself to raising pork as to fattening the bodies, or temporal part merely, of the whole human family. If we made the true distinction we should almost all of us be seen to be in the almshouse for souls.

I am much indebted to you because you look so steadily at the better side, or rather the true centre of me (for our true centre may, and perhaps oftenest does, lie entirely aside from us, and we are in fact eccentric), and, as I have elsewhere said, "give me an opportunity to live." You speak as if the image or idea which I see were reflected from me to you; and I see it again reflected from you to me, because we stand at the right angle to one another; and so it goes zigzag to what successive reflecting surfaces, before it is all dissipated or absorbed by the more unreflecting, or differently reflecting, — who knows? Or, perhaps, what you see directly, you refer to me. What a little shelf is required, by which we may impinge upon another, and build there our eyry in the clouds, and all the heavens we see above us we refer to the crags around and beneath us. Some piece of mica, as it were, in the face or eyes of one, as on the Delectable Mountains, slanted

at the right angle, reflects the heavens to us. But, in the slow geological upheavals and depressions, these mutual angles are disturbed, these suns set, and new ones rise to us. That ideal which I worshiped was a greater stranger to the mica than to me. It was not the hero I admired, but the reflection from his epaulet or helmet. It is nothing (for us) permanently inherent in another, but his attitude or relation to what we prize, that we admire. The meanest man may glitter with micacious particles to his fellow's eye. These are the spangles that adorn a man. The highest union, — the only *un-ion* (don't laugh), or central oneness, is the coincidence of visual rays. Our club-room was an apartment in a constellation where our visual rays met (and there was no debate about the restaurant). The way between us is over the mount.

Your words make me think of a man of my acquaintance whom I occasionally meet, whom you, too, appear to have met, one *Myself*, as he is called. Yet, why not call him *Yourself*? If you have met with him and know him, it is all I have done; and surely, where there is a mutual acquaintance, the *my* and *thy* make a distinction without a difference.

I do not wonder that you do not like my Canada story. It concerns me but little, and probably is not worth the time it took to tell it. Yet I had absolutely no design whatever in my mind, but simply to report what I saw. I have inserted all of myself that was implicated, or made the excursion. It has come to an end, at any rate; they will print no more, but return me my MS. when it is but little more than half done, as well

as another I had sent them, because the editor ¹ requires the liberty to omit the heresies without consulting me, — a privilege California is not rich enough to bid for.

I thank you again and again for attending to me; that is to say, I am glad that you hear me and that you also are glad. Hold fast to your most indefinite, waking dream. The very green dust on the walls is an organized vegetable; the atmosphere has its fauna and flora floating in it; and shall we think that dreams are but dust and ashes, are always disintegrated and crumbling thoughts, and not dust-like thoughts trooping to their standard with music, — systems beginning to be organized? These expectations, — these are roots, these are nuts, which even the poorest man has in his bin, and roasts or cracks them occasionally in winter evenings, — which even the poor debtor retains with his bed and his pig, *i. e.*, his idleness and sensuality. Men go to the opera because they hear there a faint expression in sound of this news which is never quite distinctly proclaimed. Suppose a man were to sell the hue, the least amount of coloring matter in the superficies of his thought, for a farm, — were to exchange an absolute and infinite value for a relative and finite one, — to gain the whole world and lose his own soul!

Do not wait as long as I have before you write. If you will look at another star, I will try to supply my side of the triangle.

Tell Mr. Brown that I remember him, and trust that he remembers me.

P. S. — Excuse this rather flippant preaching, which

¹ Of *Putnam's Magazine*.

does not cost me enough; and do not think that I mean you *always*, though your letter *requested* the subjects.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, April 10, 1853.

MR. BLAKE, — Another singular kind of spiritual football, — really nameless, handleless, homeless, like myself, — a mere arena for thoughts and feelings; definite enough outwardly, indefinite more than enough inwardly. But I do not know why we should be styled “misters” or “masters:” we come so near to being anything or nothing, and seeing that we are mastered, and not wholly sorry to be mastered, by the least phenomenon. It seems to me that we are the mere creatures of thought, — one of the lowest forms of intellectual life, we men, — as the sunfish is of animal life. As yet our thoughts have acquired no definiteness nor solidity; they are purely molluscous, not vertebrate; and the height of our existence is to float upward in an ocean where the sun shines, — appearing only like a vast soup or chowder to the eyes of the immortal navigators. It is wonderful that I can be here, and you there, and that we can correspond, and do many other things, when, in fact, there is so little of us, either or both, anywhere. In a few minutes, I expect, this slight film or dash of vapor that I am will be what is called asleep, — resting! forsooth from what? Hard work? and thought? The hard work of the dandelion down, which floats over the meadow all day; the hard work of a pismire that labors to raise a hillock all day,

and even by moonlight. Suddenly I can come forward into the utmost apparent distinctness, and speak with a sort of emphasis to you; and the next moment I am so faint an entity, and make so slight an impression, that nobody can find the traces of me. I try to hunt myself up, and find the little of me that is discoverable is falling asleep, and then I assist and tuck it up. It is getting late. How can *I* starve or feed? Can *I* be said to sleep? There is not enough of me even for that. If you hear a noise, — 't ain't I, — 't ain't I, — as the dog says with a tin kettle tied to his tail. I read of something happening to another the other day: how happens it that nothing ever happens to me? A dandelion down that never alights, — settles, — blown off by a boy to see if his mother wanted him, — some divine boy in the upper pastures.

Well, if there really is another such a meteor sojourning in these spaces, I would like to ask you if you know whose estate this is that we are on? For my part I enjoy it well enough, what with the wild apples and the scenery; but I should n't wonder if the owner set his dog on me next. I could remember something not much to the purpose, probably; but if I stick to what I do know, then —

It is worth the while to live respectably unto ourselves. We can possibly *get along* with a neighbor, even with a bedfellow, whom we respect but very little; but as soon as it comes to this, that we do not respect ourselves, then we do not get along at all, no matter how much money we are paid for halting. There are old heads in the world who cannot help me by their ex-

ample or advice to live worthily and satisfactorily to myself; but I believe that it is in my power to elevate myself this very hour above the common level of my life. It is better to have your head in the clouds, and know where you are, if indeed you cannot get it above them, than to breathe the clearer atmosphere below them, and think that you are in paradise.

Once you were in Milton¹ doubting what to do. To live a better life, — this surely can be done. Dot and carry one. Wait not for a clear sight, for that you are to get. What you see clearly you may omit to do. Milton and Worcester? It is all Blake, Blake. Never mind the rats in the wall; the cat will take care of them. All that men have said or are is a very faint rumor, and it is not worth the while to remember or refer to that. If you are to meet God, will you refer to anybody out of that court? How shall men know how I succeed, unless they are in at the life? I did not see the *Times* reporter there.

Is it not delightful to provide one's self with the necessities of life, — to collect dry wood for the fire when the weather grows cool, or fruits when we grow hungry? — not till then. And then we have all the time left for thought!

Of what use were it, pray, to get a little wood to burn, to warm your body this cold weather, if there were not a divine fire kindled at the same time to warm your spirit?

“Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!”

¹ A town near Boston.

I cuddle up by my stove, and there I get up another fire which warms fire itself. Life is so short that it is not wise to take roundabout ways, nor can we spend much time in waiting. Is it absolutely necessary, then, that we should do as we are doing? Are we chiefly under obligations to the devil, like Tom Walker? Though it is late to leave off this wrong way, it will seem early the moment we begin in the right way; instead of mid-afternoon, it will be early morning with us. We have not got half-way to dawn yet.

As for the lectures, I feel that I have something to say, especially on Traveling, Vagueness, and Poverty; but I cannot come now. I will wait till I am fuller, and have fewer engagements. Your suggestions will help me much to write them when I am ready. I am going to Haverhill¹ to-morrow, surveying, for a week or more. You met me on my last errand thither.

I trust that you realize what an exaggerator I am, — that I lay myself out to exaggerate whenever I have an opportunity, — pile Pelion upon Ossa, to reach heaven so. Expect no trivial truth from me, unless I am on the witness-stand. I will come as near to lying as you can drive a coach and four. If it is n't thus and so with me, it is with something. I am not particular whether I get the shells or meat, in view of the latter's worth.

I see that I have not at all answered your letter, but there is time enough for that.

¹ A Massachusetts town, the birthplace of Whittier.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 19, 1853.

MR. BLAKE, — My debt has accumulated so that I should have answered your last letter at once, if I had not been the subject of what is called a press of engagements, having a lecture to write for last Wednesday, and surveying more than usual besides. It has been a kind of running fight with me, — the enemy not always behind me I trust.

True, a man cannot lift himself by his own waistbands, because he cannot get out of himself; but he can expand himself (which is better, there being no up nor down in nature), and so split his waistbands, being already within himself.

You speak of doing and being, and the vanity, real or apparent, of much doing. The suckers — I think it is they — make nests in our river in the spring of more than a cart-load of small stones, amid which to deposit their ova. The other day I opened a muskrat's house. It was made of weeds, five feet broad at base, and three feet high, and far and low within it was a little cavity, only a foot in diameter, where the rat dwelt. It may seem trivial, this piling up of weeds, but so the race of muskrats is preserved. We must heap up a great pile of doing, for a small diameter of being. Is it not imperative on us that we *do* something, if we only work in a treadmill? And, indeed, some sort of revolving is necessary to produce a centre and nucleus of being. What exercise is to the body, employment is to the mind and morals. Consider what an amount of

drudgery must be performed, — how much humdrum and prosaic labor goes to any work of the least value. There are so many layers of mere white lime in every shell to that thin inner one so beautifully tinted. Let not the shellfish think to build his house of that alone; and pray, what are its tints to him? Is it not his smooth, close-fitting shirt merely, whose tints *are not* to him, being in the dark, but only when he is gone or dead, and his shell is heaved up to light, a wreck upon the beach, do they appear. With him, too, it is a Song of the Shirt, “Work, — work, — work!” And the work is not merely a police in the gross sense, but in the higher sense a discipline. If it is surely the means to the highest end we know, can any work be humble or disgusting? Will it not rather be elevating as a ladder, the means by which we are translated?

How admirably the artist is made to accomplish his self-culture by devotion to his art! The wood-sawyer, through his effort to do his work well, becomes not merely a better wood-sawyer, but measurably a better *man*. Few are the men that can work on their navels, — only some Brahmins that I have heard of. To the painter is given some paint and canvas instead; to the Irishman a hog, typical of himself. In a thousand apparently humble ways men busy themselves to make some right take the place of some wrong, — if it is only to make a better paste blacking, — and they are themselves *so much* the better morally for it.

You say that you do not succeed much. Does it concern you enough that you do not? Do you work hard enough at it? Do you get the benefit of discipline

out of it? If so, persevere. Is it a more serious thing than to walk a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours? Do you get any corns by it? Do you ever think of hanging yourself on account of failure?

If you are going into that line, — going to besiege the city of God, — you must not only be strong in engines, but prepared with provisions to starve out the garrison. An Irishman came to see me to-day, who is endeavoring to get his family out to this New World. He rises at half past four, milks twenty-eight cows (which has swollen the joints of his fingers), and eats his breakfast, without any milk in his tea or coffee, before six; and so on, day after day, for six and a half dollars a month; and thus he keeps his virtue in him, if he does not add to it; and he regards me as a gentleman able to assist him; but if I ever get to be a gentleman, it will be by working after my fashion harder than he does. If my joints are not swollen, it must be because I deal with the teats of celestial cows before breakfast (and the milker in this case is always allowed some of the milk for his breakfast), to say nothing of the flocks and herds of Admetus afterward.

It is the art of mankind to polish the world, and every one who works is scrubbing in some part.

If the work is high and far,

You must not only aim aright,
But draw the bow with all your might.

You must qualify yourself to use a bow which no humbler archer can bend.

“Work, — work, — work !”

Who shall know it for a bow? It is not of yew tree. It is straighter than a ray of light; flexibility is not known for one of its qualities.

December 22.

So far I had got when I was called off to survey. Pray read the life of Haydon the painter, if you have not. It is a small revelation for these latter days; a great satisfaction to know that he has lived, though he is now dead. Have you met with the letter of a Turkish *cadi* at the end of Layard's "Ancient Babylon"? that also is refreshing, and a capital comment on the whole book which precedes it, — the Oriental genius speaking through him.

Those Brahmins "put it through." They come off, or rather stand still, conquerors, with some withered arms or legs at least to show; and they are said to have cultivated the faculty of abstraction to a degree unknown to Europeans. If we cannot sing of faith and triumph, we will sing our despair. We will be that kind of bird. There are day owls, and there are night owls, and each is beautiful and even musical while about its business.

Might you not find some positive work to do with your back to Church and State, letting your back do all the rejection of them? Can you not *go* upon your pilgrimage, Peter, along the winding mountain path whither you face? A step more will make those funereal church bells over your shoulder sound far and sweet as a natural sound.

"Work, — work, — work!"

Why not make a *very large* mud pie and bake it in the sun! Only put no Church nor State into it, nor upset any other pepper-box that way. Dig out a woodchuck, — for that has nothing to do with rotting institutions. Go ahead.

Whether a man spends his day in an ecstasy or despondency, he must do some work to show for it, even as there are flesh and bones to show for him. We are superior to the joy we experience.

Your last two letters, methinks, have more nerve and will in them than usual, as if you had erected yourself more. Why are not they good work, if you only had a hundred correspondents to tax you?

Make your failure tragical by the earnestness and steadfastness of your endeavor, and then it will not differ from success. Prove it to be the inevitable fate of mortals, — of one mortal, — if you can.

You said that you were writing on Immortality. I wish you would communicate to me what you know about that. You are sure to live while that is your theme.

Thus I write on some text which a sentence of your letters may have furnished.

I think of coming to see you as soon as I get a new coat, if I have money enough left. I will write to you again about it.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, January 21, 1854.

MR. BLAKE, — My coat is at last done, and my mother and sister allow that I am *so far* in a condition

to go abroad. I feel as if I had gone abroad the moment I put it on. It is, as usual, a production strange to me, the wearer, — invented by some Count D'Orsay; and the maker of it was not acquainted with any of my real depressions or elevations. He only measured a peg to hang it on, and might have made the loop big enough to go over my head. It requires a not quite innocent indifference, not to say insolence, to wear it. Ah! the process by which we get our coats is not what it should be. Though the Church declares it righteous, and its priest pardons me, my own good genius tells me that it is hasty, and coarse, and false. I expect a time when, or rather an integrity by which, a man will get his coat as honestly and as perfectly fitting as a tree its bark. Now our garments are typical of our conformity to the ways of the world, *i. e.*, of the devil, and to some extent react on us and poison us, like that shirt which Hercules put on.

I think to come and see you next week, on Monday, if nothing hinders. I have just returned from court at Cambridge, whither I was called as a witness, having surveyed a water-privilege, about which there is a dispute, since you were here.

Ah! what foreign countries there are, greater in extent than the United States or Russia, and with no more souls to a square mile, stretching away on every side from every human being with whom you have no sympathy. Their humanity affects me as simply monstrous. Rocks, earth, brute beasts, comparatively are not so strange to me. When I sit in the parlors and kitchens of some with whom my business brings me — I was going

to say in contact — (business, like misery, makes strange bedfellows), I feel a sort of awe, and as forlorn as if I were cast away on a desolate shore. I think of Riley's Narrative ¹ and his sufferings. You, who soared like a merlin with your mate through the realms of æther, in the presence of the unlike, drop at once to earth, a mere amorphous squab, divested of your air-inflated pinions. (By the way, excuse this writing, for I am using the stub of the last feather I chance to possess.) You travel on, however, through this dark and desert world; you see in the distance an intelligent and sympathizing lineament; stars come forth in the dark, and oases appear in the desert.

But (to return to the subject of coats), we are well-nigh smothered under yet more fatal coats, which do not fit us, our whole lives long. Consider the cloak that our employment or station is; how rarely men treat each other for what in their true and naked characters they are; how we use and tolerate pretension; how the judge is clothed with dignity which does not belong to him, and the trembling witness with humility that does not belong to him, and the criminal, perchance, with shame or impudence which no more belong to him. It does not matter so much, then, what is the fashion of the cloak with which we cloak these cloaks. Change the coat; put the judge in the criminal-box, and the criminal on the bench, and you might think that you had changed the men.

No doubt the thinnest of all cloaks is conscious

¹ An American seaman, wrecked on the coast of Arabia, — once a popular book.

deception or lies; it is sleazy and frays out; it is not close-woven like cloth; but its meshes are a coarse network. A man can afford to lie only at the intersection of the threads; but truth puts in the filling, and makes a consistent stuff.

I mean merely to suggest how much the station affects the demeanor and self-respectability of the parties, and that the difference between the judge's coat of cloth and the criminal's is insignificant compared with, or only partially significant of, the difference between the coats which their respective stations permit them to wear. What airs the judge may put on over his coat which the criminal may not! The judge's opinion (*sententia*) of the criminal *sentences* him, and is read by the clerk of the court, and published to the world, and executed by the sheriff; but the criminal's opinion of the judge has the weight of a sentence, and is published and executed only in the supreme court of the universe, — a court not of common pleas. How much juster is the one than the other? Men are continually *sentencing* each other; but, whether we be judges or criminals, the sentence is ineffectual unless we continue ourselves.

I am glad to hear that I do not always limit your vision when you look this way; that you sometimes see the light through me; that I am here and there windows, and not all dead wall. Might not the community sometimes petition a man to remove himself as a nuisance, a darkener of the day, a too large mote?

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, August 8, 1854.

MR. BLAKE, — Methinks I have spent a rather unprofitable summer thus far. I have been too much with the world, as the poet might say.¹ The completest performance of the highest duties it imposes would yield me but little satisfaction. Better the neglect of all such, because your life passed on a level where it was impossible to recognize them. Latterly, I have heard the very flies buzz too distinctly, and have accused myself because I did not still this superficial din. We must not be too easily distracted by the crying of children or of dynasties. The Irishman erects his sty, and gets drunk, and jabbers more and more under my eaves, and I am responsible for all that filth and folly. I find it, as ever, very unprofitable to have much to do with men. It is sowing the wind, but not reaping even the whirlwind; only reaping an unprofitable calm and stagnation. Our conversation is a smooth, and civil, and never-ending speculation merely. I take up the thread of it again in the morning, with very much such courage as the invalid takes his prescribed Seidlitz powders. Shall I help you to some of the mackerel? It would be more respectable if men, as has been said before, instead of being such pigmy desperates, were Giant Despairs. Emerson says that his life is so unprofitable and shabby for the most part, that he is driven to all sorts of resources, and, among the rest, to men. I tell him that we differ only in our resources. Mine is

¹ "The world is too much with us." — *Wordsworth*.

to get away from men. They very rarely affect me as grand or beautiful; but I know that there is a sunrise and a sunset every day. In the summer, this world is a mere watering-place, — a Saratoga, — drinking so many tumblers of Congress water; and in the winter, is it any better, with its oratorios? I have seen more men than usual, lately; and, well as I was acquainted with one, I am surprised to find what vulgar fellows they are. They do a little business commonly each day, in order to pay their board, and then they congregate in sitting-rooms and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush; and when I think that they have sufficiently relaxed, and am prepared to see them steal away to their shrines, they go unashamed to their beds, and take on a new layer of sloth. They may be single, or have families in their *jaineancy*. I do not meet men who can have nothing to do with me because they have so much to do with themselves. However, I trust that a very few cherish purposes which they never declare. Only think, for a moment, of a man about his affairs! How we should respect him! How glorious he would appear! Not working for any corporation, its agent, or president, but fulfilling the end of his being! A man about *his business* would be the cynosure of all eyes.

The other evening I was determined that I would silence this shallow din; that I would walk in various directions and see if there was not to be found any depth of silence around. As Bonaparte sent out his horsemen in the Red Sea on all sides to find shallow water, so I sent forth my mounted thoughts to find deep water. I left the village and paddled up the river

to Fair Haven Pond. As the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain and purify the air, and I as smoothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the nape of the neck, and held it under in the tide of its own events, till it was drowned, and then I let it go down-stream like a dead dog. Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side, and my being expanded in proportion, and filled them. Then first could I appreciate sound, and find it musical.¹

But now for your news. Tell us of the year. Have you fought the good fight? What is the state of your crops? Will your harvest answer well to the seed-time, and are you cheered by the prospect of stretching corn-fields? Is there any blight on your fields, any murrain in your herds? Have you tried the size and quality of

¹ A lady who made such a night voyage with Thoreau, years before, says: "How wise he was to ask the elderly lady with a younger one for a row on the Concord River one moonlit night! The river that night was as deep as the heavens above; serene stars shone from its depths, as far off as the stars above. Deep answered unto deep in our souls, as the boat glided swiftly along, past low-lying fields, under overhanging trees. A neighbor's cow waded into the cool water, — she became at once a Behemoth, a river-horse, hippopotamus, or river-god. A dog barked, — he was Diana's hound, he waked Endymion. Suddenly we were landed on a little isle; our boatman, our boat glided far off in the flood. We were left alone, in the power of the river-god; like two white birds we stood on this bit of ground, the river flowing about us; only the eternal powers of nature around us. Time for a prayer, perchance, — and back came the boat and oarsman; we were ferried to our homes, — no question asked or answered. We had drank of the cup of the night, — had felt the silence and the stars."

your potatoes? It does one good to see their balls dangling in the lowlands. Have you got your meadow hay before the fall rains shall have set in? Is there enough in your barns to keep your cattle over? Are you killing weeds nowadays? or have you earned leisure to go a-fishing? Did you plant any Giant Regrets last spring, such as I saw advertised? It is not a new species, but the result of cultivation and a fertile soil. They are excellent for sauce. How is it with your marrow squashes for winter use? Is there likely to be a sufficiency of fall feed in your neighborhood? What is the state of the springs? I read that in your county there is more water on the hills than in the valleys. Do you find it easy to get all the help you require? Work early and late, and let your men and teams rest at noon. Be careful not to drink too much sweetened water, while at your hoeing, this hot weather. You can bear the heat much better for it.

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, September 19, 1854.

DEAR SIR, — I am glad to hear from you and the Plymouth men again. The world still holds together between Concord and Plymouth, it seems. I should like to be with you while Mr. Alcott is there, but I cannot come next Sunday. I will come Sunday after next, that is, October 1st, if that will do; and look out for you at the depot. I do not like to promise more than one discourse. Is there a good precedent for two?

Yours Concordially,

The first of Thoreau's many lecturing visits to Worcester, the home of his friend Blake, was in April, 1849, and from that time onward he must have read lectures there at least annually, until his last illness, in 1861-62. By 1854, the lecturing habit, in several places besides Concord, had become established; and there was a constant interchange of visits and excursions with his friends at Worcester, Plymouth, New Bedford, etc. Soon after the publication of "Walden," in the summer of 1854, Thoreau wrote these notes to Mr. Blake, touching on various matters of friendly interest.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, September 21, 1854.

BLAKE, — I have just read your letter, but do not mean now to answer it, solely for want of time to say what I wish. I directed a copy of "Walden" to you at Ticknor's, on the day of its publication, and it should have reached you before. I am encouraged to know that it interests you as it now stands, — a printed book, — for you apply a very severe test to it, — you make the highest demand on me. As for the excursion you speak of, I should like it right well, — indeed I thought of proposing the same thing to you and Brown, some months ago. Perhaps it would have been better if I had done so then; for in that case I should have been able to enter into it with that infinite margin to my views, — spotless of all engagements, — which I think so necessary. As it is, I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and

to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, *if they shall want me*; and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for. However, I think that, after having been to Plymouth, I may take a day or two — if that date will suit you and Brown. *At any rate* I will write to you then.

CONCORD, October 5, 1854.

After I wrote to you, Mr. Watson postponed my going to Plymouth one week, *i. e.*, till next Sunday; and now he wishes me to carry my instruments and survey his grounds, to which he has been adding. Since I want a little money, though I contemplate but a short excursion, I do not feel at liberty to decline this work. I do not know exactly how long it will detain me, — but there is plenty of time yet, and I will write to you again — perhaps from Plymouth.

There is a Mr. Thomas Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumly), a young English author, staying at our house at present, who asks me to teach him *botany* — *i. e.*, anything which I know; and also to make an excursion to some mountain with him. He is a well-behaved person, and *possibly* I may propose his taking that run to Wachusett with us — if it will be agreeable to you. Nay, if I do not hear any objection from you, I will consider myself *at liberty* to invite him.

CONCORD, Saturday P. M., October 14, 1854.

I have just returned from Plymouth, where I have been detained surveying much longer than I expected. What do you say to visiting Wachusett next Thursday?

I will start at 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ A. M. *unless there is a prospect of a stormy day*, go by cars to Westminster, and thence on foot five or six miles to the mountain-top, where I may engage to meet you, at (or before) 12 M. If the weather is unfavorable, I will try again, on Friday, — and again on Monday. If a storm comes on after starting, I will seek you at the tavern at Princeton centre, as soon as circumstances will permit. I shall expect an answer at once, to clinch the bargain.

The year 1854 was a memorable one in Thoreau's life, for it brought out his most successful book, "Walden," and introduced him to the notice of the world, which had paid small attention to his first book, the "Week," published five years earlier. This year also made him acquainted with two friends to whom he wrote much, and who loved to visit and stroll with him around Concord, or in more distant places, — Thomas Cholmondeley, an Englishman from Shropshire, and Daniel Ricketson, a New Bedford Quaker, of liberal mind and cultivated tastes, — an author and poet, and fond of corresponding with poets, as he did with the Howitts and William Barnes of England, and with Bryant, Emerson, Channing, and Thoreau, in America. Few of the letters to Cholmondeley are yet found, being buried temporarily in the mass of family papers at Condoover Hall, an old Elizabethan mansion near Shrewsbury, which Thomas Cholmondeley inherited, and which remains in his family's possession since his own death at Florence in 1864. But the letters of the Englishman, recently printed in the *Atlantic Monthly*

(December, 1893), show how sincere was the attachment of this ideal friend to the Concord recluse, and how well he read that character which the rest of England, and a good part of America, have been so slow to recognize for what it really was.

Thomas Cholmondeley was the eldest son of Rev. Charles Cowper Cholmondeley, rector of Overleigh, Cheshire, and of a sister to Reginald Heber, the celebrated bishop of Calcutta. He was born in 1823, and brought up at Hodnet, in Shropshire, where his father, a cousin of Lord Delamere, had succeeded his brother-in-law as rector, on the departure of Bishop Heber for India, in 1823. The son was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, — a friend, and perhaps pupil of Arthur Hugh Clough, who gave him letters to Emerson in 1854. Years before, after leaving Oxford, he had gone with some relatives to New Zealand, and before coming to New England he had published a book, “Ultima Thule,” describing that Australasian colony of England, where he lived for part of a year. He had previously studied in Germany, and traveled on the Continent. He landed in America the first time in August, 1854, and soon after went to Concord, where, at the suggestion of Emerson, he became an inmate of Mrs. Thoreau’s family. This made him intimate with Henry Thoreau for a month or two, and also brought him into acquaintance with Ellery Channing, then living across the main street of Concord, in the west end of the village, and furnishing to Thoreau a landing-place for his boat under the willows at the foot of Channing’s small garden. Alcott was not then in

Concord, but Cholmondeley made his acquaintance in Boston, and admired his character and manners.¹

With Channing and Thoreau the young Englishman visited their nearest mountain, Wachusett, and in some of their walks the artist Rowse, who had made the first portrait of Thoreau, joined, for he was then in Concord, late in 1854, engraving the fine head of Daniel Webster from a painting by Ames, and this engraving he gave both to Thoreau and to Cholmondeley. In December the Englishman, whose patriotism was roused by the delays and calamities of England in her Crimean war, resolved to go home and raise a company, as he did, first spending some weeks in lodgings at Boston (Orange Street) in order to hear Theodore Parker preach and visit Harvard College, of which I was then a student, in the senior class. He visited me and my classmate, Edwin Morton, and called on some of the Cambridge friends of Clough. In January, 1855, he sailed for England, and there received the letter of Thoreau printed on pages 249-251.

The acquaintance with Mr. Ricketson began by letter before Cholmondeley reached Concord, but Thoreau did not visit him until December, 1854. Mr. Ricketson says, "In the summer of 1854 I purchased, in

¹ See *Memoir of Bronson Alcott*, pp. 485-494. The remark of Emerson quoted on p. 486, that Cholmondeley was "the son of a Shropshire squire," was not strictly correct, his father being a Cheshire clergyman of a younger branch of the ancient race of Cholmondeley. But he was the *grandson* of a Shropshire squire (owner of land), for his mother was daughter and sister of such gentlemen, and it was her brother Richard who presented Reginald Heber and Charles Cholmondeley to the living of Hodnet, near Market Drayton.

New Bedford, a copy of 'Walden.' I had never heard of its author, but in this admirable and most original book I found so many observations on plants, birds, and natural objects generally in which I was also interested, that I felt at once I had found a congenial spirit. During this season I was rebuilding a house in the country, three miles from New Bedford, and had erected a small building which was called my 'shanty;' and my family being then in my city house, I made this building my temporary home. From it I addressed my first letter to the author of 'Walden.' In reply he wrote, 'I had duly received your very kind and frank letter, but delayed to answer it thus long because I have little skill as a correspondent, and wished to send you something more than my thanks. I was gratified by your prompt and hearty acceptance of my book. Yours is the only word of greeting I am likely to receive from a dweller in the woods like myself, — from where the whip-poor-will and cuckoo are heard, and there are better than moral clouds drifting over, and real breezes blow.' From that year until his death in 1862 we exchanged visits annually, and letters more frequently. He was much interested in the botany of our region, finding here many marine plants he had not before seen. When our friendship began, the admirers of his only two published books were few; most prominent among them were Emerson, Alcott, and Channing of Concord, Messrs. Blake and T. Brown of Worcester, Mr. Marston Watson of Plymouth, and myself. Many accused him of being an imitator of Emerson; others thought him unsocial, impracticable,

and ascetic. Now he was none of these; a more original man never lived, nor one more thoroughly personifying civility; no man could hold a finer relationship with his family than he."

In reply to Mr. Ricketson's first letter (August 12, 1854) above mentioned, Thoreau sent, after six weeks' delay, the reply of October 1, the beginning of which was just quoted. Continuing, Thoreau said:—

"Your account excites in me a desire to see the Middleborough ponds, of which I had already heard somewhat; as also some very beautiful ponds on the Cape, in Harwich, I think, near which I once passed. I have sometimes also thought of visiting that remnant of *our* Indians still living near you. But then, you know, there is nothing like one's native fields and lakes. The best news you send me is, not that Nature with you is so fair and genial, but that there is one there who likes her so well. That proves all that was asserted.

"Homer, of course, you include in your list of lovers of Nature; and, by the way, let me mention here—for this is 'my thunder' lately—William Gilpin's long series of books on the Picturesque, with their illustrations. If it chances that you have not met with these, I cannot just now frame a better wish than that you may one day derive as much pleasure from the inspection of them as I have.

"Much as you have told me of yourself, you have still, I think, a little the advantage of me in this correspondence, for I have told you still more in my book. You have therefore the broadest mark to fire at.

“A young English author, Thomas Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him; therefore excuse this very barren note from

“Yours, hastily at last.”

Between the letter just quoted and Thoreau's next, of December 19, 1854, a letter is obviously missing. Mr. Ricketson had answered (October 12), the first letter, and on December 14 had written again to convey an invitation from Mr. Mitchell that Thoreau should lecture at New Bedford, the 26th, on his way to Nantucket for the 28th. Probably Thoreau had replied to the letter of October 12, and to the invitation to bring Cholmondeley with him in the pleasant October season. In this reply he had said something which called forth from Ricketson an expression of sympathy, as well as the December invitation; for Thoreau thus replied to the letter of December 14:—

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, December 19, 1854.

DEAR SIR, — I wish to thank you for your sympathy. I had counted on seeing you when I came to New Bedford, though I did not know exactly how near to it you permanently dwelt; therefore I gladly accept your invitation to stop at your house. I am going to lecture at Nantucket the 28th, and as I suppose I must improve the earliest opportunity to get there from New Bedford, I will endeavor to come on Monday, that I may see yourself and New Bedford before my lecture.

I should like right well to see your ponds, but that is

hardly to be thought of at present. I fear that it is impossible for me to combine such things with the business of lecturing. You cannot serve God and Mammon. However, perhaps I shall have time to see something of your country. I am aware that you have not so much snow as we; there has been excellent sleighing here since the 5th inst.

Mr. Cholmondeley has left us, so that I shall come alone. Will you be so kind as to warn Mr. Mitchell that I accept at once his invitation to lecture on the 26th of this month, for I do not know that he has got my letter. Excuse this short note.¹

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 19, 1854.

MR. BLAKE, — I suppose you have heard of my truly providential meeting with Mr. [T.] Brown; providential because it saved me from the suspicion that my words had fallen altogether on stony ground, when it turned out that there was some Worcester soil there. You will allow me to consider that I correspond with him through you.

I confess that I am a very bad correspondent, so far

¹ Mr. Ricketson's immediate reply was received by Thoreau before he wrote to Blake on the 22d. He set out from Concord for Cambridge on Christmas Day, and reached Brooklawn, the country-house of his friend, towards evening of that short day, on foot, with his umbrella and traveling-bag, and he made so striking a figure in the eyes of Ricketson that he sketched it roughly in his shanty-book. His children have engraved it in their pleasing volume *Daniel Ricketson and his Friends*, from the pages of which several of these letters are taken. It is by no means a bad likeness of the plain and upright Thoreau.

as promptness of reply is concerned; but then I am sure to answer sooner or later. The longer I have forgotten you, the more I remember you. For the most part I have not been idle since I saw you. How does the world go with you? or rather, how do you get along without it? I have not yet learned to live, that I can see, and I fear that I shall not very soon. I find, however, that in the long run things correspond to my original idea, — that they correspond to nothing else so much; and thus a man may really be a true prophet without any great exertion. The day is never so dark, nor the night even, but that the laws at least of light still prevail, and so may make it light in our minds if they are open to the truth. There is considerable danger that a man will be crazy between dinner and supper; but it will not directly answer any good purpose that I know of, and it is just as easy to be sane. We have got to know what both life and death are, before we can begin to live after our own fashion. Let us be learning our a-b-c's as soon as possible. I never yet knew the sun to be knocked down and rolled through a mud-puddle; he comes out honor-bright from behind every storm. Let us then take sides with the sun, seeing we have so much leisure. Let us not put all we prize into a football to be kicked, when a bladder will do as well.

When an Indian is burned, his body may be broiled, it may be no more than a beefsteak. What of that? They may broil his *heart*, but they do not therefore broil his *courage*, — his principles. Be of good courage! That is the main thing.

If a man were to place himself in an attitude to bear manfully the greatest evil that can be inflicted on him, he would find suddenly that there was no such evil to bear; his brave back would go a-begging. When Atlas got his back made up, that was all that was required. (In this case a *priv.*, not *pleon.*, and $\tau\lambda\eta\mu$.) The world rests on principles. The wise gods will never make underpinning of a man. But as long as he crouches, and skulks, and shirks his work, every creature that has weight will be treading on his toes, and crushing him; he will himself tread with one foot on the other foot.

The monster is never just there where we think he is. What is truly monstrous is our cowardice and sloth.

Have no idle disciplines like the Catholic Church and others; have only positive and fruitful ones. Do what you know you ought to do. Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbor's advice? There is a nearer neighbor within us incessantly telling us how we should behave. But we wait for the neighbor without to tell us of some false, easier way.

They have a census-table in which they put down the number of the insane. Do you believe that they put them all down there? Why, in every one of these houses there is at least one man fighting or squabbling a good part of his time with a dozen pet demons of his own breeding and cherishing, which are relentlessly gnawing at his vitals; and if perchance he resolve at length that he will courageously combat them, he says, "Ay! ay! I will attend to you after dinner!" And, when that time comes, he concludes that he is good for

another stage, and reads a column or two about the *Eastern War*! Pray, to be in earnest, where is Sevastopol? Who is Menchikoff? and Nicholas behind there? who the Allies? Did not we fight a little (little enough to be sure, but just enough to make it interesting) at Alma, at Balaclava, at Inkermann? We love to fight far from home. Ah! the Minié musket is the king of weapons. Well, let us get one then.

I just put another stick into my stove, — a pretty large mass of white oak. How many men will do enough this cold winter to pay for the fuel that will be required to warm them? I suppose I have burned up a pretty good-sized tree to-night, — and for what? I settled with Mr. Tarbell for it the other day; but that was n't the final settlement. I got off cheaply from him. At last, one will say, "Let us see, how much wood did you burn, sir?" And I shall shudder to think that the next question will be, "What did you do while you were warm?" Do we think the ashes will pay for it? that God is an ash-man? It is a fact that we have got to render an account for the deeds done in the body.

Who knows but we shall be better the next year than we have been the past? At any rate, I wish you a really *new* year, — commencing from the instant you read this, — and happy or unhappy, according to your deserts.

TO HARRISON BLAKE.

CONCORD, December 22, 1854.

MR. BLAKE. — I will lecture for your Lyceum on the 4th of January next; and I hope that I shall have time for that good day out of doors. Mr. Cholmonde-

ley is in Boston, yet *perhaps* I may invite him to accompany me. I have engaged to lecture at New Bedford on the 26th inst., stopping with Daniel Ricketson, three miles out of town; and at Nantucket on the 28th, so that I shall be gone all next week. They say there is some danger of being weather-bound at Nantucket; but I see that others run the same risk. You had better acknowledge the receipt of this at any rate, though you should write nothing else; otherwise I shall not know whether you get it; but perhaps you will not wait till you have seen me, to answer my letter (of December 19). I will tell you what I think of lecturing when I see you. Did you see the notice of "Walden" in the last *Anti-Slavery Standard*? You will not be surprised if I tell you that it reminded me of you.

On the Christmas Day that Thoreau reached New Bedford, he had left home in the forenoon, as usual in his Cambridge visits, spent some time at Harvard College, and gone on by the train in the afternoon, which accounted for his delay. His host, who then saw him for the first time, says:—

"I had expected him at noon, but as he did not arrive, I had given him up for the day. In the latter part of the afternoon I was clearing off the snow from my front steps, when, looking up, I saw a man walking up the carriage-road, bearing a portmanteau in one hand and an umbrella in the other. He was dressed in a long overcoat of dark color, and wore a dark soft hat. I had no suspicion it was Thoreau, and rather supposed it was a peddler of small wares."

This was a common mistake to make. When Thoreau ran the gantlet of the Cape Cod villages, — “feeling as strange,” he says, “as if he were in a town in China,” — one of the old fishermen could not believe that he had not something to sell. Being finally satisfied that it was not a peddler with his pack, the old man said, “Wal, it makes no odds what ’t is you carry, so long as you carry Truth along with ye.” Mr. Ricketson came to the same conclusion about his visitor, and in the early September of 1855 returned the visit.

On the 4th of January, 1855, Ricketson wrote, saying, “Your visit, short as it was, gave us all at Brooklawn much satisfaction;” adding that he might visit Concord late in January, when he expected to be in Boston. Thoreau replied:—

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, January 6, 1855.

MR. RICKETSON, — I am pleased to hear from the shanty, whose inside and occupant I have seen. I had a very pleasant time at Brooklawn, as you know, and thereafter at Nantucket. I was obliged to pay the usual tribute to the sea, but it was more than made up to me by the hospitality of the Nantucketers. Tell Arthur that I can now compare notes with him; for though I went neither before nor behind the mast, since we had n’t any, I went with my head hanging over the side all the way.

In spite of all my experience, I persisted in reading to the Nantucket people the lecture which I read at New Bedford, and I found them to be the very audi-

ence for me. I got home Friday night, after being lost in the fog off Hyannis.¹ I have not yet found a new jackknife, but I had a glorious skating with Channing the other day, on the skates found long ago.

Mr. Cholmondeley sailed for England direct, in the America, on the 3d, after spending a night with me. He thinks even to go to the East and enlist. Last night I returned from lecturing in Worcester.

I shall be glad to see you when you come to Boston, as will also my mother and sister, who know something about you as an abolitionist. Come directly to our house. Please remember me to Mrs. Ricketson, and also to the young folks.

After writing that he expected to be at the anti-slavery meetings in Boston, January 24 and 25, ill health and a snow-storm detained Ricketson at Brooklawn, whereupon Thoreau wrote:—

¹ Hyannis was once a port for the sailing of the steamers to Nantucket, where probably Thoreau was to land on his return. He had visited the Cape before, but never Nantucket. Thomas Cholmondeley went home with the distinct purpose of going to the Crimean war, and did so. The subject of the New Bedford lecture was "Getting a Living."

Channing, his wife and children having left him, was living by himself in his house opposite to Thoreau. Late in 1855 he rejoined Mrs. Channing, in a household near Dorchester, and became one of the editors of the New Bedford *Mercury*, residing in that city in 1856-57, after the death of Mrs. Channing.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, February 1, 1855.

DEAR SIR, — I supposed, as I did not see you on the 24th or 25th, that some track or other was obstructed; but the solid earth still holds together between New Bedford and Concord, and I trust that as this time you stayed away, you may live to come another day.

I did not go to Boston, for with regard to that place I sympathize with one of my neighbors, an old man, who has not been there since the last war, when he was compelled to go. No, I have a real genius for staying at home.

I have been looking of late at Bewick's tail-pieces in the "Birds," — all they have of him at Harvard. Why will he be a little vulgar at times? Yesterday I made an excursion up our river, — skated some thirty miles in a few hours, if you will believe it. So with reading and writing and skating the night comes round again.

The early part of 1855 was spent by Thomas Cholmondeley in a tiresome passage to England, whence he wrote (January 27) to say to Thoreau that he had reached Shropshire, and been commissioned captain in the local militia, in preparation for service at Sevastopol, but reminding his Concord friend of a half promise to visit England some day. To this Thoreau made answer thus:—

TO THOMAS CHOLMONDELEY (AT HODNET).

CONCORD, Mass., February 7, 1855.

DEAR CHOLMONDELEY, — I am glad to hear that you have arrived safely at Hodnet, and that there is a solid piece of ground of that name which can support a man better than a floating plank, in that to me as yet purely historical England. But have I not seen you with my own eyes, a piece of England herself, and was not your letter come out to me thence? I have now reason to believe that Salop is as real a place as Concord; with at least as good an underpinning of granite, floating on liquid fire. I congratulate you on having arrived safely at that floating isle, after your disagreeable passage in the steamer America. So are we not all making a passage, agreeable or disagreeable, in the steamer Earth, trusting to arrive at last at some less undulating Salop and brother's house?

I cannot say that I am surprised to hear that you have joined the militia, after what I have heard from your lips; but I am glad to doubt if there will be occasion for your volunteering into the line. Perhaps I am thinking of the saying that it "is always darkest just before day." I believe it is only necessary that England be fully awakened to a sense of her position, in order that she may right herself, especially as the weather will soon cease to be her foe. I wish I could believe that the cause in which you are embarked is the cause of the people of England. However, I have no sympathy with the idleness that would contrast this fighting with the teachings of the pulpit; for, perchance,

more true virtue is being practiced at Sevastopol than in many years of peace. It is a pity that we seem to require a war, from time to time, to assure us that there is any manhood still left in man.

I was much pleased with [J. J. G.] Wilkinson's vigorous and telling assault on Allopathy, though he substitutes another and perhaps no stronger *thy* for that. Something as good on the whole conduct of the war would be of service. Cannot Carlyle supply it? We will not require him to provide the remedy. Every man to his trade. As you know, I am not in any sense a politician. You, who live in that snug and compact isle, may dream of a glorious commonwealth, but I have some doubts whether I and the new king of the Sandwich Islands shall pull together. When I think of the gold-diggers and the Mormons, the slaves and the slaveholders and the filibustiers, I naturally dream of a glorious private life. No, I am not patriotic; I shall not meddle with the Gem of the Antilles. General Quitman¹ cannot count on my aid, alas for him! nor can General Pierce.²

I still take my daily walk, or skate over Concord fields or meadows, and on the whole have more to do with nature than with man. We have not had much snow this winter, but have had some remarkably cold weather, the mercury, February 6, not rising above 6° below zero during the day, and the next morning falling to 26°. Some ice is still thirty inches thick about us.

¹ Quitman, aided perhaps by Laurence Oliphant, was aiming to capture Cuba with "filibusters" (fibustiers).

² Then President of the United States, whose life Hawthorne had written in 1852.

A rise in the river has made uncommonly good skating, which I have improved to the extent of some thirty miles a day, fifteen out and fifteen in.

Emerson is off westward, enlightening the Hamiltonians [in Canada] and others, mingling his thunder with that of Niagara. Channing still sits warming his five wits — his sixth, you know, is always limber — over that stove, with the dog down cellar. Lowell has just been appointed Professor of Belles-Lettres in Harvard University, in place of Longfellow, resigned, and will go very soon to spend another year in Europe, before taking his seat.

I am from time to time congratulating myself on my general want of success as a lecturer; apparent want of success, but is it not a real triumph? I do my work clean as I go along, and they will not be likely to want me anywhere again. So there is no danger of my repeating myself, and getting to a barrel of sermons, which you must upset, and begin again with.

My father and mother and sister all desire to be remembered to you, and trust that you will never come within range of Russian bullets. Of course, I would rather think of you as settled down there in Shropshire, in the camp of the English people, making acquaintance with your men, striking at the root of the evil, perhaps assaulting that rampart of cotton bags that you tell of. But it makes no odds where a man goes or stays, if he is only about his business.

Let me hear from you, wherever you are, and believe me yours ever in the good fight, whether before Sevastopol or under the wreken.

While Cholmondeley's first letter from England was on its way to Concord, Thoreau was one day making his occasional call at the Harvard College Library (where he found and was allowed to take away volumes relating to his manifold studies), when it occurred to him to call at my student-chamber in Holworthy Hall, and there leave a copy of his "Week." I had never met him, and was then out; the occasion of his call was a review of his two books that had come out a few weeks earlier in the *Harvard Magazine*, of which I was an editor and might be supposed to have had some share in the criticism. The volume was left with my classmate Lyman, accompanied by a message that it was intended for the critic in the Magazine. Accordingly, I gave it to Edwin Morton, who was the reviewer, and notified Thoreau by letter of that fact, and of my hope to see him soon in Cambridge or Concord.¹ To this he replied in a few days as below:—

TO F. B. SANBORN (AT HAMPTON FALLS, N. H.).

CONCORD, February 2, 1855.

DEAR SIR,—I fear that you did not get the note which I left with the Librarian for you, and so will thank you again for your politeness. I was sorry that I was obliged to go into Boston almost immediately.

¹ I had been visiting Emerson occasionally for a year or two, and knew Alcott well at this time; was also intimate with Cholmondeley in the autumn of 1854, but had never seen Thoreau, a fact which shows how recluse were then his habits. The letter below, and the long one describing his trip to Minnesota, were the only ones I received from him in a friendship of seven years. See Sanborn's *Thoreau*, pp. 195–200. Edwin Morton was my classmate. See pp. 286, 353, 440.

However, I shall be glad to see you whenever you come to Concord, and I will suggest nothing to discourage your coming, so far as I am concerned; trusting that you know what it is to take a partridge on the wing. You tell me that the author of the criticism is Mr. Morton. I had heard as much, — and indeed guessed more. I have latterly found Concord nearer to Cambridge than I believed I should, when I was leaving my Alma Mater; and hence you will not be surprised if even I feel some interest in the success of the *Harvard Magazine*.

Believe me yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

At this time I was under engagement with Mr. Emerson and others in Concord to take charge of a small school there in March; and did so without again seeing the author of "Walden" in Cambridge. Soon after my settlement at Concord, in the house of Mr. Channing, just opposite Thoreau's, he made an evening call on me and my sister (April 11, 1855), but I had already met him more than once at Mr. Emerson's, and was even beginning to take walks with him, as frequently happened in the next six years. In the following summer I began to dine daily at his mother's table, and thus saw him almost every day for three years.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, June 27, 1855.

MR. BLAKE, — I have been sick and good for nothing but to lie on my back and wait for something to

turn up, for two or three months. This has *compelled me* to postpone several things, among them writing to you, to whom I am so deeply in debt, and inviting you and Brown to Concord, — not having brains adequate to such an exertion. I should feel a little less ashamed if I could give any name to my disorder, — but I cannot, and our doctor cannot help me to it, — and I will not take the name of any disease in vain. However, there is one consolation in being sick; and that is the possibility that you may recover to a better state than you were ever in before. I expected in the winter to be deep in the woods of Maine in my canoe, long before this; but I am so far from this that I can only take a languid walk in Concord streets.

I do not know how the mistake arose about the Cape Cod excursion. The nearest I have come to that with anybody is this: About a month ago Channing proposed to me to go to Truro on Cape Cod with him, and board there a while, — but I declined. For a week past, however, I have been a little inclined to go there and sit on the seashore a week or more; but I do not venture to propose myself as the companion of him or of any peripatetic man. Not that I should not rejoice to have you and Brown or C. sitting there also. I am not sure that C. really wishes to go now; and as I go simply for the medicine of it, I should not think it worth the while to notify him when I am about to take my bitters. Since I began this, or within five minutes, I have begun to think that I will start for Truro next Saturday morning, the 30th. I do not know at what

hour the packet leaves Boston, nor exactly what kind of accommodation I shall find at Truro.

I should be singularly favored if you and Brown were there at the same time; and though you speak of the 20th of July, I will be so bold as to suggest your coming to Concord Friday night (when, by the way, Garrison and Phillips hold forth here), and going to the Cape with me. Though we take short walks together there, we can have *long* talks, and you and Brown will have time enough for your own excursions besides.

I received a letter from Cholmondeley last winter, which I should like to show you, as well as his book.¹ He said that he had "accepted the offer of a captaincy in the Salop Militia," and was hoping to take an active part in the war before long.

I thank you again and again for the encouragement your letters are to me. But I must stop this writing, or I shall have to pay for it.

NORTH TRURO, July 8, 1855.

There being no packet, I did not leave Boston till last Thursday, though I came down on Wednesday, and Channing with me. There is no public house here; but we are boarding in a little house attached to the Highland Lighthouse with Mr. James Small, the keeper. It is true the table is not so clean as could be desired, but I have found it much superior in that respect to a Provincetown hotel. They are what are called "good livers." Our host has another larger and very good

¹ The book was *Ultima Thule*, describing New Zealand.

house, within a quarter of a mile, unoccupied, where he says he can accommodate several more. He is a very good man to deal with, — has often been the representative of the town, and is perhaps the most intelligent man in it. I shall probably stay here as much as ten days longer. Board \$3.50 per week. So you and Brown had better come down forthwith. You will find either the schooner Melrose or another, or both, leaving Commerce Street, or else T Wharf, at 9 A. M. (it commonly means 10), Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, — if not other days. We left about 10 A. M., and reached Provincetown at 5 P. M., — a very good run. A stage runs up the Cape every morning but Sunday, starting at 4½ A. M., and reaches the post-office in North Truro, seven miles from Provincetown, and one from the lighthouse, about 6 o'clock. If you arrive at P. before night, you can walk over, and leave your baggage to be sent. You can also come by cars from Boston to Yarmouth, and thence by stage forty miles more, — through every day, but it costs much more, and is not so pleasant. Come by all means, for it is the best place to see the ocean in the States. . . . I *hope* I shall be worth meeting.

July 14.

You say that you hope I will excuse your frequent writing. I trust you will excuse my infrequent and curt writing until I am able to resume my old habits, which for three months I have been compelled to abandon. Methinks I am beginning to be better. I think to leave the Cape next Wednesday, and so shall not see you here; but I shall be glad to meet you in Con-

cord, though I may not be able to go *before the mast*, in a boating excursion. This is an admirable place for coolness and sea-bathing and retirement. You must come prepared for cool weather and fogs.

P. S. — There is no mail up till Monday morning.

During the spring and early summer of 1855, Thoreau was much occupied with his home duties, or was ill, — the earlier approaches of that disease of which he languished, taking medical advice in 1860–61. This must have prevented an earlier visit to Concord by his friend Ricketson than September, 1855, and I find no letters intervening, although there must have been one or two, to arrange the visit. He reached Concord about September 20, and found me living in the lower stories of Channing's house, while the owner chiefly occupied the attic, where, no doubt, as in the old Hunt house, Ricketson smoked with him. They went together to call on Edmund Hosmer, and it was at the sight of this old house that Ricketson formed the plan of occupying a chamber there. It stood a half-mile down the river, a little below where the Assabet runs into the main channel. Writing to Thoreau, Sunday, September 23, Ricketson said:—

“How charmingly you, Channing, and I dovetailed together! Few men smoke such pipes as we did, — the real Calumet; the tobacco that we smoked was free labor produce. I have n't lost sight of Solon Hosmer, the wisest-looking man in Concord, and a real *feelo-sofer*. I want you to see him, and tell him not to take down the old house where the *feelosofers* met. I think

I should like to have the large chamber for an occasional sojourn in Concord. It can be easily tinkered up so as to be a comfortable roost for a *feclosofer*, — a few old chairs, a table, bed, etc., would be all-sufficient; then you and Channing could come over in your punt and rusticate.”

The “punt” was Thoreau’s boat, in which he sometimes set up a small mast and sail, and which he kept at the foot of Channing’s garden, where, that summer, my heavy four-oared boat also lay, when my pupils were not rowing in it. In his letter to Blake of September 26, Thoreau described Ricketson, and the next day he answered Ricketson’s letter. Cholmondeley in the meantime, the war being not yet over, was making his way to the Crimea through southern Europe.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, September 26, 1855.

MR. BLAKE, — The other day I thought that my health must be better, — that I gave at last a sign of vitality, — because I experienced a slight chagrin. But I do not see how strength is to be got into my legs again. These months of feebleness have yielded few, if any, thoughts, though they have not passed without serenity, such as our sluggish Musketaquid suggests. I hope that the harvest is to come. I trust that you have at least warped up the stream a little daily, holding fast by your anchors at night, since I saw you, and have kept my place for me while I have been absent.

Mr. Ricketson of New Bedford has just made me a visit of a day and a half, and I have had a quite good

time with him. He and Channing have got on particularly well together. He is a man of very simple tastes, notwithstanding his wealth; a lover of nature; but, above all, singularly frank and plain-spoken. I think that you might enjoy meeting him.

Sincerity is a great but rare virtue, and we pardon to it much complaining, and the betrayal of many weaknesses. R. says of himself, that he sometimes thinks that he has all the infirmities of genius without the genius; is wretched without a hair pillow, etc.; expresses a great and awful uncertainty with regard to "God," "Death," his "immortality;" says, "If I only knew," etc. He loves Cowper's "Task" better than anything else; and thereafter perhaps, Thomson, Gray, and even Howitt. He has evidently suffered for want of sympathizing companions. He says that he sympathizes with much in my books, but much in them is naught to him, — "namby-pamby," — "stuff," — "mystical." Why will not I, having common sense, write in plain English always; *teach* men in detail how to live a simpler life, etc.; not go off into ——? But I say that I have no scheme about it, — no designs on men at all; and, if I had, my mode would be to tempt them with the fruit, and not with the manure. To what end do I lead a simple life at all, pray? That I may teach others to simplify their lives? — and so all our lives be *simplified* merely, like an algebraic formula? Or not, rather, that I may make use of the ground I have cleared, to live more worthily and profitably? I would fain lay the most stress forever on that which is the most important, — imports the most to me, —

though it were only (what it is likely to be) a vibration in the air. As a preacher, I should be prompted to tell men, not so much how to get their wheat bread cheaper, as of the bread of life compared with which *that* is bran. Let a man only taste these loaves, and he becomes a skillful economist at once. He'll not waste much time in earning those. Don't spend your time in drilling soldiers, who may turn out hirelings after all, but give to undrilled peasantry a *country* to fight for. The schools begin with what they call the elements, and where do they end?

I was glad to hear the other day that Higginson and —— were gone to Ktaadn; it must be so much better to go to than a Woman's Rights or Abolition Convention; better still, to the delectable primitive mounts within you, which you have dreamed of from your youth up, and seen, perhaps, in the horizon, but never climbed.

But how do *you* do? Is the air sweet to you? Do you find anything at which you can work, accomplishing something solid from day to day? Have you put sloth and doubt behind, considerably? — had one redeeming dream this summer? I dreamed, last night, that I could vault over any height it pleased me. That was *something*; and I contemplated myself with a slight satisfaction in the morning for it.

Methinks I will write to you. Methinks you will be glad to hear. We will stand on solid foundations to one another, — I a column planted on this shore, you on that. We meet the same sun in his rising. We were built slowly, and have come to our bearing. We

will not mutually fall over that we may meet, but will grandly and eternally guard the straits. Methinks I see an inscription on you, which the architect made, the stucco being worn off to it. The name of that ambitious worldly king is crumbling away. I see it toward sunset in favorable lights. Each must read for the other, as might a sailer-by. Be sure you are star-y-pointing still. How is it on your side? I will not require an answer until you think I have paid my debts to you.

I have just got a letter from Ricketson, urging me to come to New Bedford, which possibly I may do. He says I can wear my old clothes there.

Let me be remembered in your quiet house.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, September 27, 1855.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I am sorry that you were obliged to leave Concord without seeing more of it, — its river and woods, and various pleasant walks, and its worthies. I assure you that I am none the worse for my walk with you, but on all accounts the better. Methinks I am regaining my health; but I would like to know first what it was that ailed me.

I have not yet conveyed your message to Mr. Hosmer,¹ but will not fail to do so. That idea of occupy-

¹ This was Edmund Hosmer, a Concord farmer, before mentioned as a friend of Emerson, who was fond of quoting his sagacious and often cynical remarks. He had entertained George Curtis and the Alcotts at his farm on the "Turnpike," southeast of Emerson's; but now was living on a part of the old manor of Governor Winthrop, which soon passed to the ownership of the Hunts; and this house which Mr. Ricketson proposed to lease was the "old Hunt farmhouse,"

ing the old house is a good one, — quite feasible, — and you could bring your hair pillow with you. It is an *inn* in Concord which I had not thought of, — a philosopher's inn. That large chamber might make a man's idea expand proportionately. It would be well to have an interest in some old chamber in a deserted house in every part of the country which attracted us. There would be no such place to receive one's guests as that. If old furniture is fashionable, why not go the whole house at once? I shall endeavor to make Mr. Hosmer believe that the old house is the chief attraction of his farm, and that it is his duty to preserve it by all honest appliances. You might take a lease of it *in perpetuo*, and done with it.

I am so wedded to my way of spending a day, — require such broad margins of leisure, and such a complete wardrobe of old clothes, — that I am ill fitted for going abroad. Pleasant is it sometimes to sit at home, on a single egg all day, in your own nest, though it may prove at last to be an egg of chalk. The old coat that I wear is Concord; it is my morning robe and study gown, my working dress and suit of ceremony, and my nightgown after all. Cleave to the simplest ever. Home, — home, — home. *Cars* sound like *cares* to me.

I am accustomed to think very long of going anywhere, — am slow to move. I hope to hear a response of the oracle first. However, I think that I will try the effect of your talisman on the iron horse next Saturday, and dismount at Tarkiln Hill. Perhaps your sea — in truth built for the Winthrops two centuries before. It was soon after torn down.

air will be good for me. I conveyed your invitation to Channing, but he apparently will not come.

Excuse my not writing earlier; but I had not decided.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 12, 1855.

MR. RICKETSON, — I fear that you had a lonely and disagreeable ride back to New Bedford through the Carver woods and so on, — perhaps in the rain, too, and I am in part answerable for it. I feel very much in debt to you and your family for the pleasant days I spent at Brooklawn. Tell Arthur and Walton¹ that the shells which they gave me are spread out, and make quite a show to inland eyes. Methinks I still hear the strains of the piano, the violin, and the flageolet blended together. Excuse *me* for the noise which I believe drove you to take refuge in the shanty. That shanty is indeed a favorable place to expand in, which I fear I did not enough improve.

On my way through Boston I inquired for Gilpin's works at Little, Brown & Co.'s, Munroe's, Ticknor's, and Burnham's. They have not got them. They told me at Little, Brown & Co.'s that his works (not complete), in twelve vols., 8vo, were imported and sold in this country five or six years ago for about fifteen dollars. Their terms for importing are ten per cent on the cost. I copied from the "London Catalogue of Books, 1846-51," at their shop, the following list of Gilpin's Works : —

¹ Sons of Mr. Ricketson; the second, a sculptor, modeled the medallion head of Thoreau reproduced in photogravure for the frontispiece of this volume.

ough, 1793, it is said : "There is on the easterly shore of Assawampsitt Pond, on the shore of Betty's Neck, two rocks which have curious marks thereon (supposed to be done by the Indians), which appear like the step-pings of a person with naked feet which settled into the rocks; likewise the prints of a hand on several places, with a number of other marks; also there is a rock on a high hill a little to the eastward of the old stone fishing wear, where there is the print of a person's hand in said rock."

It would be well to look at those rocks again more carefully; also at the rock on the hill.

I should think that you would like to explore Snip-atuit Pond in Rochester, — it is so large and near. It is an interesting fact that the alewives used to ascend to it, — if they do not still, — both from Matta-poisett and through Great Quitticus.

There will be no trouble about the chamber in the old house, though, as I told you, Mr. Hosmer *may* expect some compensation for it. He says, "Give my respects to Mr. Ricketson, and tell him that I cannot be at a large expense to preserve an antiquity or curiosity. Nature must do its work." "But," says I, "he asks you only not to assist nature."

It was on October 1 that Thoreau made this visit to New Bedford, spending the best part of a week with his friends there. They sailed about the bay and visited the ponds in Middleborough, and on Saturday, October 6, he parted with Ricketson at Plymouth, and returned home. At that time Ricketson proposed to

return Thoreau's visit before October 20, but, in a note now lost, Thoreau sent him word that Channing had left Concord, "perhaps for the winter." The visit was then given up, — which accounts for the tone of Thoreau's next letter, of October 16.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 16, 1855.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I have got both your letters at once. You must not think Concord so barren a place when Channing¹ is away. There are the river and fields left yet; and I, though ordinarily a man of business, should have some afternoons and evenings to spend with you, I trust, — that is, if you could stand so much of me. If you can spend your time profitably here, or without *ennui*, having an occasional ramble or *tête-à-tête* with one of the natives, it will give me pleasure to have you in the neighborhood. You see I am preparing you for our awful unsocial ways, — keeping in our dens a good part of the day, — sucking our claws perhaps. But then we make a religion of it, and that you cannot but respect.

If you know the taste of your own heart, and like it, come to Concord, and I'll warrant you enough here to season the dish with, — aye, even though Channing and Emerson and I were all away. We might paddle quietly up the river. Then there are one or two more ponds to be seen, etc.

I should very much enjoy further rambling with you

¹ Mr. Channing had gone, October, 1855, to live in New Bedford, and help edit the *Mercury* there.

in your vicinity, but must postpone it for the present. To tell the truth, I am planning to get seriously to work after these long months of inefficiency and idleness. I do not know whether you are haunted by any such demon which puts you on the alert to pluck the fruit of each day as it passes, and store it safely in your bin. True, it is well to live abandonedly from time to time; but to our working hours that must be as the spile to the bung. So for a long season I must enjoy only a low slanting gleam in my mind's eye from the Middleborough ponds far away.

Methinks I am getting a little more strength into those knees of mine; and, for my part, I believe that God *does* delight in the strength of a man's legs.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 9, 1855.

MR. BLAKE, — Thank you! thank you for going a-wooding with me, — and enjoying it, — for being warmed by my wood fire. I have indeed enjoyed it much alone. I see how I might enjoy it yet more with company, — how we might help each other to live. And to be admitted to Nature's hearth costs nothing. None is excluded, but excludes himself. You have only to push aside the curtain.

I am glad to hear that you were there too. There are many more such voyages, and longer ones, to be made on that river, for it is the water of life. The Ganges is nothing to it. Observe its reflections, — no idea but is familiar to it. That river, though to dull eyes it seems terrestrial wholly, flows through Elysium.

What powers bathe in it invisible to villagers! Talk of its shallowness, — that hay-carts can be driven through it at midsummer; its depth passeth my understanding. If, forgetting the allurements of the world, I could drink deeply enough of it; if, cast adrift from the shore, I could with complete integrity float on it, I should never be seen on the Mill-Dam again.¹ If there is any depth in me, there is a corresponding depth in it. It is the cold blood of the gods. I paddle and bathe in their artery.

I do not want a stick of wood for so trivial a use as to burn even, but they get it overnight, and carve and gild it that it may please my eye. What persevering lovers they are! What infinite pains to attract and delight us! They will supply us with fagots wrapped in the daintiest packages, and freight paid; sweet-scented woods, and bursting into flower, and resounding as if Orpheus had just left them, — these shall be our fuel, and we still prefer to chaffer with the wood-merchant!

The jug we found still stands draining bottom up on the bank, on the sunny side of the house. That river, — who shall say exactly whence it came, and whither it goes? Does aught that flows come from a higher source? Many things drift downward on its surface which would enrich a man. If you could only be on the alert all day, and every day! And the nights are as long as the days.

Do you not think you could contrive thus to get woody fibre enough to bake your wheaten bread with?

¹ The centre of Concord village, where the post-office and shops are, — so called from an old mill-dam where now is a street.

Would you not perchance have tasted the sweet crust of another kind of bread in the meanwhile, which ever hangs ready baked on the bread-fruit trees of the world?

Talk of burning your smoke after the wood has been consumed! There is a far more important and warming heat, commonly lost, which precedes the burning of the wood. It is the smoke of industry, which is incense. I had been so thoroughly warmed in body and spirit, that when at length my fuel was housed, I came near selling it to the ash-man, as if I had extracted all its heat.

You should have been here to help me get in my boat. The last time I used it, November 27th, paddling up the Assabet, I saw a great round pine log sunk deep in the water, and with labor got it aboard. When I was floating this home so gently, it occurred to me why I had found it. It was to make wheels with to roll my boat into winter quarters upon. So I sawed off two thick rollers from one end, pierced them for wheels, and then of a joist which I had found drifting on the river in the summer I made an axletree, and on this I rolled my boat out.

Miss Mary Emerson¹ is here, — the youngest person in Concord, though about eighty, — and the most apprehensive of a genuine thought; earnest to know of your inner life; most stimulating society; and exceed-

¹ The aunt of R. W. Emerson, then eighty-one years old, an admirer of Thoreau, as her notes to him show. For an account of her see Emerson's *Lectures and Biographical Sketches*, Centenary Ed., pp. 397-433; Riverside Ed., pp. 371-404.

ingly witty withal. She says they called her old when she was young, and she has never grown any older. I wish you could see her.

My books¹ did not arrive till November 30th, the cargo of the *Asia* having been complete when they reached Liverpool. I have arranged them in a case which I made in the meanwhile, partly of river boards. I have not dipped far into the new ones yet. One is splendidly bound and illuminated. They are in English, French, Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit. I have not made out the significance of this godsend yet.

Farewell, and bright dreams to you!

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, December 25, 1855.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — Though you have not shown your face here, I trust that you did not interpret my last note to my disadvantage. I remember that, among other things, I wished to break it to you, that, owing to engagements, I should not be able to show you so much attention as I could wish, or as you had shown to me. How we did scour over the country! I hope your horse will live as long as one which I hear just died in the south of France at the age of forty. Yet I had no doubt you would get quite enough of me. Do not give it up so easily. The old house is still empty, and Hosmer is easy to treat with.

Channing was here about ten days ago. I told him

¹ The books on India, Egypt, etc., sent by Cholmondeley. See p. 271. They were divided between the Concord Public Library and the libraries of Alcott, Blake, Emerson, Sanborn, etc.

of my visit to you, and that he too must go and see you and your country.¹ This may have suggested his writing to you.

That island lodge, especially for some weeks in a summer, and new explorations in your vicinity, are certainly very alluring; but *such are my engagements to myself*, that I dare not promise to wend your way, but will for the present only heartily thank you for your kind and generous offer. When my vacation comes, then look out.

My legs have grown considerably stronger, and that is all that ails me.

But I wish now above all to inform you, — though I suppose you will not be particularly interested, — that Cholmondeley has gone to the Crimea, “a complete soldier,” with a design, when he returns, if he ever returns, to buy a cottage in the South of England, and tempt me over; but that, before going, he busied himself in buying, and has caused to be forwarded to me by Chapman, a royal gift, in the shape of twenty-one distinct works (one in nine volumes, — forty-four volumes in all), almost exclusively relating to ancient Hindoo literature, and scarcely one of them to be bought in America.² I am familiar with many of them,

¹ Mr. Channing became a frequent visitor at Brooklawn in the years of his residence at New Bedford, 1856–58. See p. 274.

² These books were ordered by Cholmondeley in London, and sent to Boston just as he was starting for the Crimean War, in October, 1855, calling them “a nest of Indian books.” They included Mill’s *History of British India*, several translations of the sacred books of India, and one of them in Sanscrit; the works of Bunsen, so far as then published, and other valuable books. In the note accompanying

and know how to prize them. I send you information of this as I might of the birth of a child.

Please remember me to all your family.

On the date of Thoreau's letter of December 25, 1855, another event occurred, of some note in these annals of friendship. Channing, from his Dorchester abode, suddenly showed himself at Ricketson's door. "I had just written his name when old Ranger announced him. . . . He arrived on Christmas day" (as Thoreau had done the year before) "and his first salutation on meeting me at the front door of my house was, 'That's your shanty,' pointing towards it. He is engaged with the editor of the *N. B. Mercury*, and boards in town, but whereabouts I have not yet [February 26, 1856] discovered. He usually spends Saturday and a part of Sunday with me." In replying to this information, Thoreau gives that admirable character of his poet neighbor which has often been quoted.

this gift, Cholmondeley said, "I think I never found so much kindness in all my travels as in your country of New England." In return, Thoreau sent his English friend, in 1857, his own *Week*, Emerson's *Poems*, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and F. L. Olmsted's book on the Southern States (then preparing for the secession which they attempted four years later). This was perhaps the first copy of Whitman seen in England, and when Cholmondeley began to read it to his stepfather, Rev. Z. Macaulay, at Hodnet, that clergyman declared he would not hear it, and threatened to throw it in the fire. On reading the *Week* (he had received *Walden* from Thoreau when first in America), Cholmondeley wrote me, "Would you tell dear Thoreau that the lines I admire so much in his *Week* begin thus: —

'Low-anchored cloud,
Newfoundland air,' etc.

In my mind the best thing he ever wrote."

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 5, 1856.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I have been out of town, else I should have acknowledged your letter before. Though not in the best mood for writing, I will say what I can now. You plainly have a rare, though a cheap, resource in your shanty. Perhaps the time will come when every country-seat will have one, — when every country-seat will *be one*. I would advise you to see that shanty business out, though you go shanty-mad. Work your vein till it is exhausted, or conducts you to a broader one; so that Channing shall stand before your shanty, and say, “That is your house.”

This has indeed been a grand winter for me, and for all of us. I am not considering how much I have enjoyed it. What matters it how happy or unhappy we have been, if we have minded our business and advanced our affairs? I have made it a part of my business to wade in the snow and take the measure of the ice. The ice on one of our ponds was just two feet thick on the first of March; and I have to-day been surveying a wood-lot, where I sank about two feet at every step.

It is high time that you, fanned by the warm breezes of the Gulf Stream, had begun to “*lay*,” for even the Concord hens have, though one wonders where they find the raw material of egg-shell here. Beware how you put off your laying to any later spring, else your cackling will not have the inspiring early spring sound.

I was surprised to hear the other day that Channing

was in New Bedford. When he was here last (in December, I think), he said, like himself, in answer to my inquiry where he lived, "that he did not know the name of the place;" so it has remained in a degree of obscurity to me. As you have made it certain to me that he is in New Bedford, perhaps I can return the favor by putting you on the track to his boarding-house there. Mrs. Arnold told Mrs. Emerson where it was; and the latter thinks, though she may be mistaken, that it was at a Mrs. Lindsay's.

I am rejoiced to hear that you are getting on so bravely with him and his verses. He and I, as you know, have been old cronies,¹ —

"Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill,
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard," etc.

"But O, the heavy change," now he is gone. The Channing you have seen and described is the real Simon Pure. You have seen him. Many a good ramble may you have together! You will see in him still more of the same kind to attract and to puzzle you. How to serve him most effectually has long been a problem with his friends. Perhaps it is left for you to solve it. I suspect that the most that you or any one can do for him is to appreciate his genius, — to buy and

¹ Ellery Channing is mentioned, though not by name, in the *Week* (pp. 169, 378), and in *Walden* (p. 295). He was the comrade of Thoreau in Berkshire, and on the Hudson, in New Hampshire, Canada, and Cape Cod, and in many rambles nearer Concord. He was also a companion of Hawthorne in his river voyages, as mentioned in the *Mosses*.

read, and cause others to buy and read, his poems. That is the hand which he has put forth to the world, — take hold of that. Review them if you can, — perhaps take the risk of publishing something more which he may write. Your knowledge of Cowper will help you to know Channing. He will accept sympathy and aid, but he will not bear questioning, unless the aspects of the sky are particularly auspicious. He will ever be “reserved and enigmatic,” and you must deal with him at arm’s length.

I have no secrets to tell you concerning him, and do not wish to call obvious excellences and defects by far-fetched names. I think I have already spoken to you more, and more to the purpose, on this theme, than I am likely to write now; nor need I suggest how witty and poetic he is, and what an inexhaustible fund of good fellowship you will find in him.

As for visiting you in April, though I am inclined enough to take some more rambles in your neighborhood, especially by the seaside, I dare not engage myself, nor allow you to expect me. The truth is, I have my enterprises now as ever, at which I tug with ridiculous feebleness, but admirable perseverance, and cannot say when I shall be sufficiently fancy-free for such an excursion.

You have done well to write a lecture on Cowper. In the expectation of getting you to read it here, I applied to the curators of our Lyceum;¹ but, alas, our

¹ The Concord Lyceum, founded in 1829, and still extant, though not performing its original function of lectures and debates. See pp. 51, 154, etc.

Lyceum has been a failure this winter for want of funds. It ceased some weeks since, with a debt, they tell me, to be carried over to the next year's account. Only one more lecture is to be read by a Signor Somebody, an Italian, paid for by private subscription, as a deed of charity to the lecturer. They are not rich enough to offer you your expenses even, though probably a month or two ago they would have been glad of the chance.

However, the old house has not failed yet. That offers you lodging for an indefinite time after you get into it; and in the meanwhile I offer you bed and board in my father's house, — always excepting hair pillows and new-fangled bedding.

Remember me to your family.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, March 13, 1856.

MR. BLAKE, — It is high time I sent you a word. I have not heard from Harrisburg since offering to go there, and have not been invited to lecture anywhere else the past winter. So you see I am fast growing rich. This is quite right, for such is my relation to the lecture-goers, I should be surprised and alarmed if there were any great call for me. I confess that I am considerably alarmed even when I hear that an individual wishes to meet me, for my experience teaches me that we shall thus only be made certain of a mutual strangeness, which otherwise we might never have been aware of.

I have not yet recovered strength enough for such a

walk as you propose, though pretty well again for circumscribed rambles and chamber work. Even now, I am probably the greatest walker in Concord, — to its disgrace be it said. I remember our walks and talks and sailing in the past with great satisfaction, and trust that we shall have more of them ere long, — have more woodings-up, — for even in the spring we must still seek “fuel to maintain our fires.”

As you suggest, we would fain value one another for what we are absolutely, rather than relatively. How will this do for a symbol of sympathy?



As for compliments, even the stars praise me, and I praise them. They and I sometimes belong to a mutual admiration society. Is it not so with you? I know you of old. Are you not tough and earnest to be talked at, praised, or blamed? Must *you* go out of the room because you are the subject of conversation? Where will you go to, pray? Shall we look into the “Letter Writer” to see what compliments are admissible? I am not afraid of praise, for I have practiced it on myself. As for my deserts, I never took an account of that stock, and in this connection care not whether I am deserving or not. When I hear praise coming, do I not elevate and arch myself to hear it like the sky, and as impersonally? Think I appropriate any of it to my weak legs? No. Praise away *till all is blue*.

I see by the newspapers that the season for making sugar is at hand. Now is the time, whether you be rock, or white maple, or hickory. I trust that you have prepared a store of sap-tubs and sumach spouts, and invested largely in kettles. Early the first frosty morning, tap your maples, — the sap will not run in summer, you know. It matters not how little juice you get, if you get all you can, and boil it down. I made just one crystal of sugar once, one twentieth of an inch cube, out of a pumpkin, and it sufficed. Though the yield be no greater than that, this is not less the season for it, and it will be not the less sweet, nay, it will be infinitely the sweeter.

Shall, then, the maple yield sugar, and not man? Shall the farmer be thus active, and surely have so much sugar to show for it, before this very March is gone, — while I read the newspaper? While he works in his sugar-camp let me work in mine, — for sweetness is in me, and to sugar it shall come, — it shall not all go to leaves and wood. Am I not a *sugar maple* man, then? Boil down the sweet sap which the spring causes to flow within you. Stop not at syrup, — go on to sugar, though you present the world with but a single crystal, — a crystal not made from trees in your yard, but from the new life that stirs in your pores. Cheerfully skim your kettle, and watch it set and crystallize, making a holiday of it if you will. Heaven will be propitious to you as to him.

Say to the farmer: There is your crop; here is mine. Mine is a sugar to sweeten sugar with. If you will listen to me, I will sweeten your whole load, — your whole life.

Then will the callers ask, Where is Blake? He is in his sugar-camp on the mountainside. Let the world await him. Then will the little boys bless you, and the great boys too, for such sugar is the origin of many condiments, — Blakians in the shops of Worcester, of new form, with their mottoes wrapped up in them. Shall men taste only the sweetness of the maple and the cane the coming year?

A walk over the crust to Asnebumskit, standing there in its inviting simplicity, is tempting to think of, — making a fire on the snow under some rock! The very poverty of outward nature implies an inward wealth in the walker. What a Golconda is he conversant with, thawing his fingers over such a blaze! But — but —

Have you read the new poem, “The Angel in the House”? Perhaps you will find it good for you.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 21, 1856.

MR. BLAKE, — I have not for a long time been *putting such thoughts together* as I should like to read to the company you speak of. I have enough of that sort to say, or even read, but not time now to arrange it. Something I have prepared might prove for their entertainment or refreshment perchance; but I would not like to have a hat carried round for it. I have just been reading some papers to see if they would do for your company; but though I thought pretty well of them as long as I read them to myself, when I got an auditor to try them on, I felt that they would not answer. How could I let you drum up a company to hear

them? In fine, what I have is either too scattered or loosely arranged, or too light, or else is too scientific and matter-of-fact (I run a good deal into that of late) for so hungry a company.

I am still a learner, not a teacher, feeding somewhat omnivorously, browsing both stalk and leaves; but I shall perhaps be enabled to speak with the more precision and authority by and by, — if philosophy and sentiment are not buried under a multitude of details.

I do not refuse, but accept your invitation, only changing the time. I consider myself invited to Worcester once for all, and many thanks to the inviter. As for the Harvard excursion,¹ will you let me suggest another? Do you and Brown come to Concord on Saturday, if the weather promises well, and spend the Sunday here on the river or hills, or both. So we shall save some of our money (which is of next importance to our souls), and lose — I do not know what. You say you *talked* of coming here before; now *do* it. I do not propose this because I think that I am worth your spending time with, but because I hope that we may prove flint and steel to one another. It is at most only an hour's ride farther, and you can at any rate do what you please when you get here.

¹ This was the town of Harvard, not the college. Perhaps the excursion was to visit Fruitlands, where Alcott and Lane had established their short-lived community, in a beautiful spot near Still River, an affluent of the Nashua, and half-way from Concord to Wachusett. "Asnebumskit," mentioned in a former letter, is the highest hill near Worcester, as "Nobscot" is the highest near Concord. Both have Indian names.

Then we will see if we have any apology to offer for our existence. So come to Concord, — come to Concord, — come to Concord! or — your suit shall be defaulted.

As for the dispute about solitude and society, any comparison is impertinent. It is an idling down on the plane at the base of a mountain, instead of climbing steadily to its top. Of course you will be glad of all the society you can get to go up with. Will you go to glory with me? is the burden of the song. I love society so much that I swallowed it all at a gulp, — that is, all that came in my way. It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and when we do soar, the company grows thinner and thinner till there is none at all. It is either the *Tribune*¹ on the plain, a sermon on the mount, or a very private ecstasy still higher up. We are not the less to aim at the summits, though the multitude does not ascend them. Use all the society that will abet you. But perhaps I do not enter into the spirit of your talk.

In the spring of 1856, Mr. Alcott, then living in Walpole, N. H., visited Concord, and while there suggested to Thoreau that the upper valley of the Connecticut, in which Walpole lies, was good walking-ground, and that he would be glad to see him there. When autumn began to hover in the distance, Thoreau recalled this invitation, and sent the letter below.

¹ The New York newspaper.

TO BRONSON ALCOTT (AT WALPOLE, N. H.).

CONCORD, September 1, 1856.

MR. ALCOTT, — I remember that, in the spring, you invited me to visit you. I feel inclined to spend a day or two with you and on your hills at this season, returning, perhaps, by way of Brattleboro. What if I should take the cars for Walpole next Friday morning? Are you at home? And will it be convenient and agreeable to you to see me then? I will await an answer.

I am but poor company, and it will not be worth the while to put yourself out on my account; yet from time to time I have some thoughts which would be the better for an airing. I also wish to get some hints from September on the Connecticut to help me understand that season on the Concord; to snuff the musty fragrance of the decaying year in the primitive woods. There is considerable cellar-room in my nature for such stores; a whole row of bins waiting to be filled, before I can celebrate my Thanksgiving. Mould is the richest of soils, yet *I* am not mould. It will always be found that one flourishing institution exists and battens on another mouldering one. The Present itself is parasitic to this extent.

Your fellow-traveler,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

As fortune would have it, Mr. Alcott was then making his arrangements for a conversational tour in the vicinity of New York; but he renewed the invitation

for himself, while repeating it in the name of Mrs. Alcott and his daughters. Thoreau made the visit, I believe, and some weeks later, at the suggestion of Mr. Alcott, he was asked by Marcus Spring of New York to give lectures and survey their estate for a community at Perth Amboy, N. J., in which Mr. Spring and his friends, the Birneys, Welds, Grimkés, etc., had united for social and educational purposes. It was a colony of radical opinions and old-fashioned culture; the Grimkés having been bred in Charleston, S. C., which they left by reason of their opposition to negro slavery, and the elder Birney having held slaves in Alabama until his conscience bade him emancipate them, after which he, too, could have no secure home among slaveholders. He was the first presidential candidate of the voting Abolitionists, as Lincoln was the last; and his friend, Theodore Weld, who married Miss Grimké, had been one of the early apostles of emancipation in Ohio. Their circle at Eagleswood appealed to Thoreau's sense of humor, and is described by him in a letter soon to be given.

In June, 1856, Thoreau made a long visit at Brooklawn. In August, Mr. Ricketson, who had proposed a summer visit to Concord, found himself prevented by feeble health, and received the two following letters from Thoreau:—

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, September 2, 1856.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — My father and mother regret that your indisposition is likely to prevent your coming to Concord at present. It is as well that you do not, if you depend on seeing me, for I expect to go to New Hampshire the latter part of the week. I shall be glad to see you afterward, if you are prepared for and can endure my unsocial habits.

I would suggest that you have one or two of the teeth which you can best spare extracted at once, for the sake of your general, no less than particular health. This is the advice of one who has had quite his share of toothache in this world. I am a trifle stouter than when I saw you last, yet far, far short of my best estate.

I thank you for two newspapers which you have sent me; am glad to see that you have studied out the history of the ponds, got the Indian names straightened, — which means made more crooked, — etc., etc. I remember them with great satisfaction. They are all the more interesting to me for the lean and sandy soil that surrounds them. Heaven is not one of your fertile Ohio bottoms, you may depend on it. Ah, the Middleborough ponds! — Great Platte lakes. Remember me to the perch in them. I trust that I may have some better craft than that oarless pumpkin-seed¹ the next time I navigate them.

From the size of your family I infer that Mrs. Ricket-

¹ An odd boat.

son and your daughters have returned from Franconia. Please remember me to them, and also to Arthur and Walton; and tell the latter that if, in the course of his fishing, he should chance to come across the shell of a terrapin, and will save it for me, I shall be exceedingly obliged to him.

Channing dropped in on us the other day, but soon dropped out again.

CONCORD, September 23, 1856.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I have returned from New Hampshire, and find myself *in statu quo*. My journey proved one of business purely. As you suspected, I saw Alcott, and I spoke to him of you, and your good will toward him; so now you may consider yourself introduced. He would be glad to hear from you about a conversation in New Bedford. He was about setting out on a conversing tour to Fitchburg, Worcester, and, three or four weeks hence, Waterbury, Ct., New York, Newport (?) or Providence (?). You may be sure that you will not have occasion to repent of any exertions which you may make to secure an audience for him. I send you one of his programmes, lest he should not have done so himself.

You propose to me teaching the following winter. I find that I cannot entertain the idea. It would require such a revolution of all my habits, I think, and would sap the very foundations of me. I am engaged to Concord and my own private pursuits by 10,000 ties, and it would be suicide to rend them. If I were weaker, and not somewhat stronger, physically, I should be more tempted. I am so busy that I cannot even think

of visiting you. The days are not long enough, or I am not strong enough to do the work of the day, before bedtime.

Excuse my paper. It chances to be the best I have.

In October, 1856, Mr. Spring, whom Mr. Alcott was then visiting, wrote to Thoreau inviting him to come to Eagleswood, give lectures, and survey two hundred acres of land belonging to the community, laying out streets and making a map of the proposed village. Thoreau accepted the proposal, and soon after wrote the following letter, which Miss Thoreau submitted to Mr. Emerson for publication, with other letters, in the volume of 1865; but he returned it, inscribed, "Not printable at present." The lapse of time has removed this objection.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU.

[Direct] EAGLESWOOD, PERTH AMBOY, N. J.,

Saturday eve, November 1, 1856.

DEAR SOPHIA, — I have hardly had time and repose enough to write to you before. I spent the afternoon of Friday (it seems some months ago) in Worcester, but failed to see [Harrison] Blake, he having "gone to the horse-race" in Boston; to atone for which I have just received a letter from him, asking me to stop at Worcester and lecture on my return. I called on [Theo.] Brown and [T. W.] Higginson; in the evening came by way of Norwich to New York in the steamer Commonwealth, and, though it was so windy inland, had a perfectly smooth passage, and about as good a

sleep as usually at home. Reached New York about seven A. M., too late for the John Potter (there was n't any Jonas), so I spent the forenoon there, called on Greeley (who was not in), met [F. A. T.] Bellev in Broadway and walked into his workshop, read at the Astor Library, etc. I arrived here, about thirty miles from New York, about five P. M. Saturday, in company with Miss E. Peabody, who was returning in the same covered wagon from the Landing to Eagleswood, which last place she has just left for the winter.

This is a queer place. There is one large long stone building, which cost some forty thousand dollars, in which I do not know exactly who or how many work (one or two familiar places and more familiar names have turned up), a few shops and offices, an old farmhouse, and Mr. Spring's perfectly private residence, within twenty rods of the main building. The city of Perth Amboy is about as big as Concord, and Eagleswood is one and a quarter miles southwest of it, on the Bay side. The central fact here is evidently Mr. [Theodore] Weld's school, recently established, around which various other things revolve. Saturday evening I went to the schoolroom, hall, or what not, to see the children and their teachers and patrons dance. Mr. Weld, a kind-looking man with a long white beard, danced with them, and Mr. [E. J.] Cutler, his assistant (lately from Cambridge, who is acquainted with Sanborn), Mr. Spring, and others. This Saturday evening dance is a regular thing, and it is thought something strange if you don't attend. They take it for granted that you want society!

Sunday forenoon I attended a sort of Quaker meeting at the same place (the Quaker aspect and spirit prevail here, — Mrs. Spring says, “Does thee not?”), where it was expected that the Spirit would move me (I having been previously spoken to about it); and it, or something else, did, — an inch or so. I said just enough to set them a little by the ears and make it lively. I had excused myself by saying that I could not adapt myself to a particular audience; for all the speaking and lecturing here have reference to the children, who are far the greater part of the audience, and they are not so bright as New England children. Imagine them sitting close to the wall, all around a hall, with old Quaker-looking men and women here and there. There sat Mrs. Weld [Grimké] and her sister, two elderly gray-headed ladies, the former in extreme Bloomer costume, which was what you may call remarkable; Mr. Arnold Buffum, with broad face and a great white beard, looking like a pier-head made of the cork-tree with the bark on, as if he could buffet a considerable wave; James G. Birney, formerly candidate for the presidency, with another particularly white head and beard; Edward Palmer, the anti-money man (for whom communities were made), with his ample beard somewhat grayish. Some of them, I suspect, are very worthy people. Of course you are wondering to what extent all these make one family, and to what extent twenty. Mrs. Kirkland¹ (and this a name only to me) I saw. She has just bought a lot here. They all know

¹ Mrs. Caroline Kirkland, wife of Prof. William Kirkland, then of New York, — a writer of wit and fame at that time.

more about your neighbors and acquaintances than you suspected.

On Monday evening I read the moose story to the children, to their satisfaction. Ever since I have been constantly engaged in surveying Eagleswood, — through woods, salt marshes, and along the shore, dodging the tide, through bushes, mud, and beggar-ticks, having no time to look up or think where I am. (It takes ten or fifteen minutes before each meal to pick the beggar-ticks out of my clothes; burs and the rest are left, and rents mended at the first convenient opportunity.) I shall be engaged perhaps as much longer. Mr. Spring wants me to help him about setting out an orchard and vineyard, Mr. Birney asks me to survey a small piece for him, and Mr. Alcott, who has just come down here for the third Sunday, says that Greeley (I left my name for him) invites him and me to go to his home with him next Saturday morning and spend the Sunday.

It seems a twelvemonth since I was not here, but I hope to get settled deep into my den again ere long. The hardest thing to find here is solitude — and Concord. I am at Mr. Spring's house. Both he and she and their family are quite agreeable.

I want you to write to me immediately (just left off to talk French with the servant man), and let father and mother put in a word. To them and to Aunts, love from

HENRY.

The date of this visit to Eagleswood is worthy of note, because in that November Thoreau made the

acquaintance of the late Walt Whitman, in whom he ever after took a deep interest. Accompanied by Mr. Alcott, he called on Whitman, then living at Brooklyn; and I remember the calm enthusiasm with which they both spoke of Whitman upon their return to Concord. "Three men," said Emerson, in his funeral eulogy of Thoreau, "have of late years strongly impressed Mr. Thoreau, — John Brown, his Indian guide in Maine, Joe Polis, and a third person, not known to this audience." This last was Whitman, who has since become well known to a larger audience.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

EAGLESWOOD, N. J., November 19, 1856.

MR. BLAKE, — I have been here much longer than I expected, but have deferred answering you, because I could not foresee when I should return. I do not know yet within three or four days. This uncertainty makes it impossible for me to appoint a day to meet you, until it should be too late to hear from you again. I think, therefore, that I must go straight home. I feel some objection to reading that "What shall it profit" lecture *again* in Worcester; but if you are quite sure that it will be worth the while (it is a grave consideration), I will even make an independent journey from Concord for that purpose. I have read three of my old lectures (that included) to the Eagleswood people, and, unexpectedly, with rare success, — *i. e.*, I was aware that what I was saying was silently taken in by their ears.

You must excuse me if I write mainly a business letter now, for I am sold for the time, — am merely

Thoreau the surveyor here, — and solitude is scarcely obtainable in these parts.

Alcott has been here three times, and, Saturday before last, I went with him and Greeley, by invitation of the last, to G.'s farm, thirty-six miles north of New York. The next day A. and I heard Beecher preach; and what was more, we visited Whitman the next morning (A. had already seen him), and were much interested and provoked. He is apparently the greatest democrat the world has seen. Kings and aristocracy go by the board at once, as they have long deserved to. A remarkably strong though coarse nature, of a sweet disposition, and much prized by his friends. Though peculiar and rough in his exterior, his skin (all over (?)) red, he is essentially a gentleman. I am still somewhat in a quandary about him, — feel that he is essentially strange to me, at any rate; but I am surprised by the sight of him. He is very broad, but, as I have said, not fine. He said that I misapprehended him. I am not quite sure that I do. He told us that he loved to ride up and down Broadway all day on an omnibus, sitting beside the driver, listening to the roar of the carts, and sometimes gesticulating and declaiming Homer at the top of his voice. He has long been an editor and writer for the newspapers, — was editor of the *New Orleans Crescent* once; but now has no employment but to read and write in the forenoon, and walk in the afternoon, like all the rest of the scribbling gentry.

I shall probably be in Concord next week; so you can direct to me there.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 6, 1853.

MR. BLAKE, — I trust that you got a note from me at Eagleswood, about a fortnight ago. I passed through Worcester on the morning of the 25th of November, and spent several hours (from 3.30 to 6.20) in the travelers' room at the depot, as in a dream, it now seems. As the first Harlem train unexpectedly connected with the first from Fitchburg, I did not spend the forenoon with you as I had anticipated, on account of baggage, etc. If it had been a seasonable hour, I should have seen you, — *i. e.*, if you had not gone to a horse-race. But think of making a call at half past three in the morning! (would it not have implied a three-o'clock-in-the-morning courage in both you and me?) as it were, ignoring the fact that mankind are really not at home, — are not out, but so deeply in that they cannot be seen, — nearly half their hours at this season of the year.

I walked up and down the main street, at half past five, in the dark, and paused long in front of Brown's store, trying to distinguish its features; considering whether I might safely leave his *Putnam* in the door-handle, but concluded not to risk it. Meanwhile a watchman (?) seemed to be watching me, and I moved off. Took another turn around there, and had the very earliest offer of the *Transcript*¹ from an urchin behind, whom I actually could not see, it was so dark. So I withdrew, wondering if you and B. would

¹ A Worcester newspaper.

know if I had been there. You little dream who is occupying Worcester when you are all asleep. Several things occurred there that night which I will venture to say were not put into the *Transcript*. A cat caught a mouse at the depot, and gave it to her kitten to play with. So that world-famous tragedy goes on by night as well as by day, and nature is *emphatically* wrong. Also I saw a young Irishman kneel before his mother, as if in prayer, while she wiped a cinder out of his eye with her tongue; and I found that it was never too late (or early?) to learn something. These things transpired while you and B. were, to all practical purposes, nowhere, and good for nothing, — not even for society, — not for horse-races, — nor the taking back of a *Putnam's Magazine*. It is true, I might have recalled you to life, but it would have been a cruel act, considering the kind of life you would have come back to.

However, I would fain write to you now by broad daylight, and report to you some of my life, such as it is, and recall you to your life, which is not always lived by you, even by daylight. Blake! Brown! are you awake? are you aware what an ever-glorious morning this is, — what long-expected, never-to-be-repeated opportunity is now offered to get life and knowledge?

For my part, I am trying to wake up, — to wring slumber out of my pores; for, generally, I take events as unconcernedly as a fence-post, — absorb wet and cold like it, and am pleasantly tickled with lichens slowly spreading over me. Could I not be content, then, to be a cedar post, which lasts twenty-five years?

Would I not rather be that than the farmer that set it? or he that preaches to the farmer? and go to the heaven of posts at last? I think I should like that as well as any would like it. But I should not care if I sprouted into a living tree, put forth leaves and flowers, and bore fruit.

I am grateful for what I am and have. My thanksgiving is perpetual. It is surprising how contented one can be with nothing definite, — only a sense of existence. Well, anything for variety. I am ready to try this for the next ten thousand years, and exhaust it. How sweet to think of! my extremities well charred, and my intellectual part too, so that there is no danger of worm or rot for a long while. My breath is sweet to me. O how I laugh when I think of my vague, indefinite riches. No run on my bank can drain it, for my wealth is not possession but enjoyment.

What are all these years made for? and now another winter comes, so much like the last? Can't we satisfy the beggars once for all?

Have you got in your wood for this winter? What else have you got in? Of what use a great fire on the hearth, and a confounded little fire in the heart? Are you prepared to make a decisive campaign, — to pay for your costly tuition, — to pay for the suns of past summers, — for happiness and unhappiness lavished upon you?

Does not Time go by swifter than the swiftest equine trotter or racker?

Stir up Brown. Remind him of his duties, which outrun the date and span of Worcester's years past

and to come. Tell him to be sure that he is on the main street, however narrow it may be, and to have a lit sign, visible by night as well as by day.

Are they not patient waiters, — they who wait for us? But even they shall not be losers.

December 7.

That Walt Whitman, of whom I wrote to you, is the most interesting fact to me at present. I have just read his second edition (which he gave me), and it has done me more good than any reading for a long time. Perhaps I remember best the poem of Walt Whitman, an American, and the Sun-Down Poem. There are two or three pieces in the book which are disagreeable, to say the least; simply sensual. He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the beasts spoke. I think that men have not been ashamed of themselves without reason. No doubt there have always been dens where such deeds were unblushingly recited, and it is no merit to compete with their inhabitants. But even on this side he has spoken more truth than any American or modern that I know. I have found his poem exhilarating, encouraging. As for its sensuality, — and it may turn out to be less sensual than it appears, — I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read them without harm, that is, without understanding them. One woman told me that no woman could read it, — as if a man could read what a woman could not. Of course Walt Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of?

On the whole, it sounds to me very brave and American, after whatever deductions. I do not believe that all the sermons, so called, that have been preached in this land put together are equal to it for preaching.

We ought to rejoice greatly in him. He occasionally suggests something a little more than human. You can't confound him with the other inhabitants of Brooklyn or New York. How they must shudder when they read him! He is awfully good.

To be sure I sometimes feel a little imposed on. By his heartiness and broad generalities he puts me into a liberal frame of mind prepared to see wonders, — as it were, sets me upon a hill or in the midst of a plain, — stirs me well up, and then — throws in a thousand of brick. Though rude, and sometimes ineffectual, it is a great primitive poem, — an alarum or trumpet-note ringing through the American camp. Wonderfully like the Orientals, too, considering that when I asked him if he had read them, he answered, “ No: tell me about them.”

I did not get far in conversation with him, — two more being present, — and among the few things which I chanced to say, I remember that one was, in answer to him as representing America, that I did not think much of America or of politics, and so on, which may have been somewhat of a damper to him.

Since I have seen him, I find that I am not disturbed by any brag or egoism in his book. He may turn out the least of a braggart of all, having a better right to be confident.

He is a great fellow.

There is in Alcott's diary an account of this interview with Whitman, and the Sunday morning in Ward Beecher's Brooklyn church, from which a few passages may be taken. Hardly any person met by either of these Concord friends in their later years made so deep an impression on both as did this then almost unknown poet and thinker, concerning whom Cholmondeley wrote to Thoreau in 1857: "Is there actually such a *man* as Whitman? Has any one seen or handled him? His is a tongue 'not understood' of the English people. I find *the gentleman* altogether left out of the book. It is the first book I have ever seen which I should call a 'new book.'"

Mr. Alcott writes under date of November 7, 1856, in New York: "Henry Thoreau arrives from Eagleswood, and sees Swinton, a wise young Scotchman, and Walt Whitman's friend, at my room (15 Laight Street), — Thoreau declining to accompany me to Mrs. Botta's parlors, as invited by her. He sleeps here. (November 8.) We find Greeley at the Harlem station, and ride with him to his farm, where we pass the day, and return to sleep in the city, — Greeley coming in with us; Alice Cary, the authoress, accompanying us also. (Sunday, November 9.) We cross the ferry to Brooklyn, and hear Ward Beecher at the Plymouth Church. It was a spectacle, — and himself the preacher, if preacher there be anywhere now in pulpits. His auditors had to weep, had to laugh, under his potent magnetism, while his doctrine of justice to all men, bond and free, was grand. House, entries, aisles, galleries, all were crowded. Thoreau called it pagan, but I pronounced it good, very

good, — the best I had witnessed for many a day, and hopeful for the coming time. At dinner at Mrs. Manning's. Miss M. S. was there, curious to see Thoreau. After dinner we called on Walt Whitman (Thoreau and I), but finding him out, we got all we could from his mother, a stately, sensible matron, believing absolutely in Walter, and telling us how good he was, and how wise when a boy; and how his four brothers and two sisters loved him, and still take counsel of the great man he has grown to be. We engaged to call again early in the morning, when she said Walt would be glad to see us. (Monday, 10th.) Mrs. Tyndale of Philadelphia goes with us to see Walt, — Walt the satyr, the Bacchus, the very god Pan. We sat with him for two hours, and much to our delight; he promising to call on us at the International at ten in the morning to-morrow, and there have the rest of it." Whitman failed to call at his hour the next day.

TO B. B. WILEY (AT CHICAGO).

CONCORD, December 12, 1856.

MR. WILEY,¹ — It is refreshing to hear of your earnest purpose with respect to your culture, and I can send you no better wish than that you may not be thwarted

¹ B. B. Wiley, then of Providence, since of Chicago (deceased), had written to Thoreau, September 4, for the *Week*, which the author was then selling on his own account, having bought back the unsalable first edition from his publisher, Munroe. In a letter of October 31, to which the above is a reply, he mentions taking a walk with Charles Newcomb, then of Providence, since of London and Paris, now dead, — a *Dial* contributor, and a special friend of Emerson; then inquires about Confucius, the Hindoo philosophers, and Swedenborg.

by the cares and temptations of life. Depend on it, *now* is the accepted time, and probably you will never find yourself better disposed or freer to attend to your culture than at this moment. When *They* who inspire us with the idea are ready, shall not we be ready also?

I do not remember anything which Confucius has said directly respecting man's "origin, purpose, and destiny." He was more practical than that. He is full of wisdom applied to human relations, — to the private life, — the family, — government, etc. It is remarkable that, according to his own account, the sum and substance of his teaching is, as you know, to do as you would be done by.

He also said (I translate from the French), "Conduct yourself suitably towards the persons of your family, then you will be able to instruct and to direct a nation of men."

"To nourish one's self with a little rice, to drink water, to have only his bended arm to support his head, is a state which has also its satisfaction. To be rich and honored by iniquitous means is for me as the floating cloud which passes."

"As soon as a child is born he must respect its faculties: the knowledge which will come to it by and by does not resemble at all its present state. If it arrive at the age of forty or fifty years without having learned anything, it is no more worthy of any respect." This last, I think, will speak to your condition.

But at this rate I might fill many letters.

Our acquaintance with the ancient Hindoos is not at all personal. The full names that can be relied upon

are very shadowy. It is, however, tangible works that we know. The best I think of are the Bhagvat Geeta (an episode in an ancient heroic poem called the Mahabarat), the Vedas, the Vishnu Purana, the Institutes of Menu, etc.

I cannot say that Swedenborg has been directly and practically valuable to me, for I have not been a reader of him, except to a slight extent; but I have the highest regard for him, and trust that I shall read his works in some world or other. He had a wonderful knowledge of our interior and spiritual life, though his illuminations are occasionally blurred by trivialities. He comes nearer to answering, or attempting to answer, literally, your questions concerning man's origin, purpose, and destiny, than any of the worthies I have referred to. But I think that that is not *altogether* a recommendation; since such an answer to these questions cannot be discovered any more than perpetual motion, for which no reward is now offered. The noblest man it is, methinks, that knows, and by his life suggests, the most about these things. Crack away at these nuts, however, as long as you can, — the very exercise will ennoble you, and you may get something better than the answer you expect.

TO B. B. WILEY (AT CHICAGO).

CONCORD, April 26, 1857.

MR. WILEY, — I see that you are turning a broad furrow among the books, but I trust that some very private journal all the while holds its own through their midst. Books can only reveal us to ourselves, and

as often as they do us this service we lay them aside. I should say, read Goethe's autobiography, by all means, also Gibbon's, Haydon the painter's, and our Franklin's of course; perhaps also Alfieri's, Benvenuto Cellini's, and De Quincey's "Confessions of an Opium-Eater," — since you like autobiography. I think you must read Coleridge again, and further, skipping all his theology, *i. e.*, if you value precise definitions and a discriminating use of language. By the way, read De Quincey's *Reminiscences of Coleridge and Wordsworth*.

How shall we account for our pursuits, if they are original? We get the language with which to describe our various lives out of a common mint. If others have their losses which they are busy repairing, so have I *mine*, and their hound and horse may *perhaps* be the symbols of some of them.¹ But also I have lost, or am in danger of losing, a far finer and more ethereal trea-

¹ When, in 1855 or 1856, Thoreau started to wade across from Duxbury to Clark's Island, and was picked up by a fishing-boat in the deep water, and landed on the "back side" of the island (see letter to Mr. Watson of April 25, 1858), Edward Watson ("Uncle Ed") was "saggin' round" to see that everything was right alongshore, and encountered the unexpected visitor. "How did *you* come here?" "Oh, from Duxbury," said Thoreau, and they walked to the old Watson house together. "You say in one of your books," said Uncle Ed, "that you once lost a horse and a hound and a dove, — now I should like to know what you meant by that?" "Why, everybody has met with losses, have n't they?" "H'm, — pretty way to answer a fellow!" said Mr. Watson; but it seems this was the usual answer. In the long dining-room of the old house that night he sat by the window and told the story of the Norse voyagers to New England, — perhaps to that very island and the Gurnet near by, — as Morton fancies in his review of Thoreau in the *Harvard Magazine* (January, 1855).

sure which commonly no loss, of which they are conscious, will symbolize. This I answer hastily and with some hesitation, according as I now understand my words. . . .

Methinks a certain polygamy with its troubles is the fate of almost all men. They are married to two wives: their genius (a celestial muse), and also to some fair daughter of the earth. Unless these two were fast friends before marriage, and so are afterward, there will be but little peace in the house.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, December 31, 1856.

MR. BLAKE, — I think it will not be worth the while for me to come to Worcester to lecture at all this year. It will be better to wait till I am — perhaps unfortunately — more in that line. My writing has not taken the shape of lectures, and therefore I should be obliged to read one of three or four old lectures, the best of which I have read to some of your auditors before. I carried that one which I call “Walking, or the Wild,” to Amherst, N. H., the evening of that cold Thursday,¹ and I am to read another at Fitchburg, February 3. I am simply their hired man. This will probably be the extent of my lecturing hereabouts.

I must depend on meeting Mr. Wasson some other time.

¹ This was when he spoke in the vestry of the Calvinistic church, and said, on his return to Concord, “that he hoped he had done something to upheave and demolish the structure above,” — the vestry being beneath the church.

Perhaps it always costs me more than it comes to to lecture before a promiscuous audience. It is an irreparable injury done to my modesty even, — I become so indurated.

O solitude! obscurity! meanness! I never triumph so as when I have the least success in my neighbor's eyes. The lecturer gets fifty dollars a night; but what becomes of his winter? What consolation will it be hereafter to have fifty thousand dollars for living in the world? I should like not to exchange *any* of my life for money.

These, you may think, are reasons for not lecturing, when you have no great opportunity. It is even so, perhaps. I could lecture on dry oak leaves; I could, but who could hear me? If I were to try it on any large audience, I fear it would be no gain to them, and a positive loss to me. I should have behaved rudely toward my rustling friends.¹

I am surveying, instead of lecturing, at present. Let me have a skimming from your "pan of unwrinkled cream."

¹ Notwithstanding this unwillingness to lecture, Thoreau did speak at Worcester, February 13, 1857, on "Walking," but scrupulously added to his consent (February 6), "I told Brown it had not been much altered since I read it in Worcester; but now I think of it, much of it must have been new to you, because, having since divided it into two, I am able to read what before I omitted. Nevertheless, I should like to have it understood by those whom it concerns, that I am invited to read in public (if it be so) what I have already read, in part, to a private audience." This throws some light on his method of preparing lectures, which were afterwards published as essays; they were made up from his journals, and new entries expanded them.

The proposition about Mr. Alcott in Thoreau's letter of September 23, 1856, to Mr. Ricketson took effect in the spring of 1857, and early in April he went to visit the Ricketsons in New Bedford, going down from Walpole, and there met his younger friends Channing and Thoreau. Anticipating Mr. Alcott's visit, Thoreau wrote thus:—

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 28, 1857.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — If it chances to be perfectly agreeable and convenient to you, I will make you a visit next week (say Wednesday or Thursday), and we will have some more rides to Assawampset and the seashore. Have you got a boat on the former yet? Who knows but we may camp out on the island? I propose this now, because it will be more novel to me at this season, and I should like to see your early birds, etc.

Your historical papers have all come safely to hand, and I thank you for them. I see that they will be indispensable *mémoires pour servir*. By the way, have you read Church's "History of Philip's War," and looked up the localities? It should make part of a chapter.

I had a long letter from Cholmondeley lately, which I should like to show you,

I will expect an answer to this straightway, — but be sure you let your own convenience and inclinations rule it. Please remember me to your family.

He was welcomed, of course, and went down April 2,

as indicated in the letter of the day before. But he had not been informed that Alcott was already there, writing in his Diary of April 1, this sketch of Brooklawn and its occupants:—

“A neat country residence, surrounded by wild pastures and low woods, — the little stream Acushnet flowing east of the house, and into Fairhaven Bay. The hamlet of Acushnet at the ‘Head of the River’ lies within half a mile of Ricketson’s house. His tastes are pastoral, simple even to wildness; and he passes a good part of his day in the fields and woods, — or in his rude ‘Shanty’ near his house, where he writes and reads his favorite authors, Cowper having the first place. He is in easy circumstances, and has the manners of an English gentleman, — frank, hospitable, and with positive persuasions of his own; mercurial, perhaps, and wayward a little sometimes, but full of kindness and sensibility to suffering.”

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, April 1, 1857.

DEAR RICKETSON, — I got your note of welcome night before last. Channing is not here; at least I have not seen nor heard of him, but depend on meeting him in New Bedford. I expect, if the weather is favorable, to take the 4.30 train from Boston to-morrow, Thursday, P. M., for I hear of no noon train, and shall be glad to find your wagon at Tarkiln Hill, for I see it will be rather late for going across lots.

Alcott was here last week, and will probably visit New Bedford within a week or two.

I have seen all the spring signs you mention, and a few more, even here. Nay, I heard one frog peep nearly a week ago, — methinks the very first one in all this region. I wish that there were a few more signs of spring in myself; however, I take it that there *are* as many within us as we think we hear *without* us. I am decent for a steady pace, but not yet for a race. I have a little cold at present, and you speak of rheumatism about the head and shoulders. Your frost is not quite out. I suppose that the earth itself has a little cold and rheumatism about these times; but all these things together produce a very fair general result. In a concert, you know, we must sing our parts feebly sometimes, that we may not injure the general effect. I shouldn't wonder if my two-year-old invalidity had been a positively charming feature to some amateurs favorably located. Why not a blasted man as well as a blasted tree, on your lawn?

If you should happen not to see me by the train named, do not go again, but wait at home for me, or a note from

Yours,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

On that Thursday, April 2, Alcott wrote in his Diary, "Henry Thoreau comes to tea, also Ellery Channing, and we talk till into the evening late." This visit of Thoreau was his longest, lasting until April 15, and it was during the fortnight that he sang "Tom Bowling" and danced with vigor in the Brooklawn drawing-room, a scene which Alcott loved to describe. Sophia Thoreau, writing in 1862, said: "I have

so often witnessed the like that I can easily imagine how it was, and I remember that Henry gave me some account. I recollect he said that he did not scruple to tread on Mr. Alcott's toes."

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, April 17, 1857.

MR. BLAKE, — I returned from New Bedford night before last. I met Alcott there, and learned from him that probably you had gone to Concord. I am very sorry that I missed you. I had expected you earlier, and at last thought that I should get back before you came; but I ought to have notified you of my absence. However, it would have been too late, after I had made up my mind to go. I hope you lost nothing by going a little round.

I took out the celtis seeds at your request, at the time we spoke of them, and left them in the chamber on some shelf or other. If you have found them, very well; if you have not found them, very well: but tell Hale¹ of it, if you see him. My mother says that you and Brown and Rogers and Wasson (titles left behind) talk of coming down on me some day. Do not fail to come, one and all, and within a week or two, if possible; else I may be gone again. Give me a short notice, and then come and spend a day on Concord River, — or say that you will come if it is fair, unless

¹ Rev. Edward E. Hale, then pastor at Worcester. Others mentioned in the letter are Rev. David A. Wasson and Dr. Seth Rogers, — the latter a physician with whom Mr. Wasson was living in Worcester.

you are confident of bringing fair weather with you. Come and be Concord, as I have been Worcestered.

Perhaps you came nearer to me for not finding me at home; for trains of thought the more connect when trains of cars do not. If I had actually met you, you would have gone again; but now I have not yet dismissed you. I hear what you say about personal relations with joy. It is as if you had said: "I value the best and finest part of you, and not the worst. I can even endure your very near and real approach, and prefer it to a shake of the hand." This intercourse is not subject to time or distance.

I have a very long new and faithful letter from Cholmondeley which I wish to show you. He speaks of sending me more books !!

If I were with you now, I could tell you much of Ricketson, and my visit to New Bedford; but I do not know how it will be by and by. I should like to have you meet R., who is the frankest man I know. Alcott and he get along very well together. Channing has returned to Concord with me, — probably for a short visit only.

Consider this a business letter, which you know *counts* nothing in the game we play. Remember me particularly to Brown.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, June 6, 1857, 3 P. M.

MR. BLAKE, — I have just got your note, but I am sorry to say that I this very morning sent a note to Channing, stating that I would go with him to Cape

Cod next week on an excursion which we have been talking of for some time. If there were time to communicate with you, I should ask you to come to Concord on Monday, before I go; but as it is, I must wait till I come back, which I think will be about ten days hence. I do not like this delay, but there seems to be a fate in it. Perhaps Mr. Wasson will be well enough to come by that time. I will notify you of my return, and shall depend on seeing you all.

June 23d. I returned from Cape Cod last evening, and now take the first opportunity to invite you men of Worcester to this quiet *Mediterranean* shore. Can you come this week on Friday, or next Monday? I mention the earliest days on which I suppose you can be ready. If more convenient, name some other time *within ten days*. I shall be rejoiced to see you, and to act the part of skipper in the contemplated voyage. I have just got another letter from Cholmondeley, which may interest you somewhat.

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, August 17, 1857.

MR. WATSON, — I am much indebted to you for your glowing communication of July 20th. I had that very day left Concord for the wilds of Maine; but when I returned, August 8th, two out of the six worms remained nearly, if not quite, as bright as at first, I was assured. In their best estate they had excited the admiration of many of the inhabitants of Concord. It was a singular coincidence that I should find these worms awaiting me, for my mind was full of a phos-

phorescence which I had seen in the woods. I have waited to learn something more about them before acknowledging the receipt of them. I have frequently met with glow-worms in my night walks, but am not sure they were the same kind with these. Dr. Harris once described to me a larger kind than I had found, "nearly as big as your little finger;" but he does not name them in his report.

The only authorities on Glow-worms which I chance to have (and I am pretty well provided) are Kirby and Spence (the fullest), Knapp ("Journal of a Naturalist"), "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge" (Rennie), a French work, etc., etc.; but there is no minute, scientific description of any of these. This is apparently a female of the genus *Lampyris*; but Kirby and Spence say that there are nearly two hundred species of this genus alone. The one commonly referred to by English writers is the *Lampyris noctiluca*; but judging from Kirby and Spence's description, and from the description and plate in the French work, this is not that one, for, besides other differences, both say that the light proceeds from the abdomen. Perhaps the worms exhibited by Durkee (whose statement to the Boston Society of Natural History, second July meeting, in the *Traveller* of August 12, 1857, I send you) were the same with these. I do not see how they could be the *L. noctiluca*, as he states.

I expect to go to Cambridge before long, and if I get any more light on this subject I will inform you. The two worms are still alive.

I shall be glad to receive the drosera at any time, if

you chance to come across it. I am looking over Loudon's "Arboretum," which we have added to our library, and it occurs to me that it was written expressly for you, and that you cannot avoid placing it on your own shelves.

I should have been glad to see the whale, and might perhaps have done so, if I had not at that time been seeing "the elephant" (or moose) in the Maine woods. I have been associating for about a month with one Joseph Polis, the chief man of the Penobscot tribe of Indians, and have learned a great deal from him, which I should like to tell you some time.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, August 18, 1857.

DEAR SIR, — Your Wilson Flagg¹ seems a serious person, and it is encouraging to hear of a contemporary who recognizes Nature so squarely, and selects such a theme as "Barns." (I would rather "Mount Auburn" were omitted.) But he is not alert enough. He wants stirring up with a pole. He should practice turning a series of somersets rapidly or jump up and see how many times he can strike his feet together before coming down. Let him make the earth turn round now the other way, and whet his wits on it, whichever way it goes, as on a grindstone; in short, see how many ideas he can entertain at once.

His style, as I remember, is singularly vague (I refer

¹ A writer on scenery and natural history, who outlived Thoreau, and never forgave him for the remark about "stirring up with a pole," which really might have been less graphic.

to the book), and, before I got to the end of the sentences, I was off the track. If you indulge in long periods, you must be sure to have a snapper at the end. As for style of writing, if one has anything to say, it drops from him simply and directly, as a stone falls to the ground. There are no two ways about it, but down it comes, and he may stick in the points and stops wherever he can get a chance. New ideas come into this world somewhat like falling meteors, with a flash and an explosion, and perhaps somebody's castle-roof perforated. To try to polish the stone in its descent, to give it a peculiar turn, and make it whistle a tune, perchance, would be of no use, if it were possible. Your polished stuff turns out not to be meteoric, but of this earth. However, there is plenty of time, and Nature is an admirable schoolmistress.

Speaking of correspondence, you ask me if I "cannot turn over a new leaf in that line." I certainly could if I were to receive it; but just then I looked up and saw that your page was dated "May 10," though mailed in August, and it occurred to me that I had seen you since that date this year. Looking again, it appeared that your note was written in '56!! However, it was a *new* leaf to me, and I *turned it over* with as much interest as if it had been written the day before. Perhaps you kept it so long in order that the manuscript and subject-matter might be more in keeping with the old-fashioned paper on which it was written.

I traveled the length of Cape Cod on foot, soon after you were here, and, within a few days, have returned from the wilds of Maine, where I have made a journey

of three hundred and twenty-five miles with a canoe and an Indian, and a single white companion, — Edward Hoar, Esq., of this town, lately from California, — traversing the head waters of the Kennebec, Penobscot, and St. John.

Can't you extract any advantage out of that depression of spirits you refer to? It suggests to me cider-mills, wine-presses, etc., etc. All kinds of pressure or power should be used and made to turn some kind of machinery.

Channing was just leaving Concord for Plymouth when I arrived, but said he should be here again in two or three days.

Please remember me to your family, and say that I have at length learned to sing "Tom Bowlin" according to the notes.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, September 9, 1857.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I thank you for your kind invitation to visit you, but I have taken so many vacations this year, — at New Bedford, Cape Cod, and Maine, — that any more relaxation — call it rather dissipation — will cover me with shame and disgrace. I have not earned what I have already enjoyed. As some heads cannot carry much wine, so it would seem that I cannot bear so much society as you can. I have an immense appetite for solitude, like an infant for sleep, and if I don't get enough of it this year, I shall cry all the next.

My mother's house is full at present; but if it were

not, I would have no right to invite you hither, while entertaining such designs as I have hinted at. However, if you care to storm the town, I will engage to take some afternoon walks with you, — retiring into profoundest solitude the most sacred part of the day.

Ricketson had written to invite Thoreau to visit him again, saying among other things, “Walton’s small sailboat is now on Assawampset Pond.” After visiting Concord that autumn, he proposed another visit in December, saying (December 11, 1857), “I long to see your long beard. Channing says it is terrible to behold, but improves you mightily.” This fixes the date, late in that year, when Thoreau first wore his full beard, as shown in his latest portraits.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, August 18, 1857.

MR. BLAKE, — Fifteenthly. It seems to me that you need some absorbing pursuit. It does not matter much what it is, so it be honest. Such employment will be favorable to your development in more characteristic and important directions. You know there must be impulse enough for steerageway, though it be not toward your port, to prevent your drifting helplessly on to rocks or shoals. Some sails are set for this purpose only. There is the large fleet of scholars and men of science, for instance, always to be seen standing off and on every coast, and saved thus from running on to reefs, who will at last run into their proper haven, we trust.

It is a pity you were not here with Brown and Wiley. I think that in this case, *for a rarity*, the more the merrier.

You perceived that I did not entertain the idea of our going together to Maine on such an excursion as I had planned. The more I thought of it, the more imprudent it appeared to me. I did think to have written you before going, though not to propose your going also; but I went at last very suddenly, and could only have written a business letter, if I had tried, when there was no business to be accomplished. I have now returned, and think I have had a quite profitable journey, chiefly from associating with an intelligent Indian. My companion, Edward Hoar, also found his account in it, though he suffered considerably from being obliged to carry unusual loads over wet and rough "carries," — in one instance five miles through a swamp, where the water was frequently up to our knees, and the fallen timber higher than our heads. He went over the ground three times, not being able to carry all his load at once. This prevented his ascending Ktaadn. Our best nights were those when it rained the hardest, on account of the mosquitoes. I speak of these things, which were not unexpected, merely to account for my not inviting you.

Having returned, I flatter myself that the world appears in some respects a little larger, and not, as usual, smaller and shallower, for having extended my range. I have made a short excursion into the new world which the Indian dwells in, or is. He begins where we leave off. It is worth the while to detect new faculties

in man, — he is so much the more divine; and anything that fairly excites our admiration expands us. The Indian, who can find his way so wonderfully in the woods, possesses so much intelligence which the white man does not, — and it increases my own capacity, as well as faith, to observe it. I rejoice to find that intelligence flows in other channels than I knew. It redeems for me portions of what seemed brutish before.

It is a great satisfaction to find that your oldest convictions are permanent. With regard to essentials, I have never had occasion to change my mind. The aspect of the world varies from year to year, as the landscape is differently clothed, but I find that the *truth* is still *true*, and I never regret any emphasis which it may have inspired. Ktaadn is there still, but much more surely my old conviction is there, resting with more than mountain breadth and weight on the world, the source still of fertilizing streams, and affording glorious views from its summit, if I can get up to it again. As the mountains still stand on the plain, and far more unchangeable and permanent, — stand still grouped around, farther or nearer to my maturer eye, the ideas which I have entertained, — the everlasting teats from which we draw our nourishment.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, November 16, 1857.

MR. BLAKE, — You have got the start again. It was I that owed you a letter or two, if I mistake not.

They make a great ado nowadays about hard times;¹

¹ The panic of 1857, — the worst since 1837.

but I think that the community generally, ministers and all, take a wrong view of the matter, though some of the ministers preaching according to a formula may pretend to take a right one. This general failure, both private and public, is rather occasion for rejoicing, as reminding us whom we have at the helm, — that justice is always done. If our merchants did not most of them fail, and the banks too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred doing such business surely break down is perhaps the sweetest fact that statistics have revealed, — exhilarating as the fragrance of sal-lows in spring. Does it not say somewhere, “The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice”? If thousands are thrown out of employment, it suggests that they were not well employed. Why don’t they take the hint? It is not enough to be industrious; so are the ants. What are you industrious about?

The merchants and company have long laughed at transcendentalism, higher laws, etc., crying, “None of your moonshine,” as if they were anchored to something not only definite, but sure and permanent. If there was any institution which was presumed to rest on a solid and secure basis, and more than any other represented this boasted common sense, prudence, and practical talent, it was the bank; and now those very banks are found to be mere reeds shaken by the wind. Scarcely one in the land has kept its promise. . . . It would seem as if you only need live forty years in any age of this world, to see its most promising government become the government of Kansas, and banks nowhere.

Not merely the Brook Farm and Fourierite communities, but now the community generally has failed. But there is the moonshine still, serene, beneficent, and unchanged. Hard times, I say, have this value, among others, that they show us what such promises are worth, — where the *sure* banks are. I heard some Mr. Eliot praised the other day because he had paid some of his debts, though it took nearly all he had (why, I've done as much as that myself many times, and a little more), and then gone to board. What if he has? I hope he's got a good boarding-place, and can pay for it. It's not everybody that can. However, in my opinion, it is cheaper to keep house, — *i. e.*, if you don't keep too big a one.

Men will tell you sometimes that “money's hard.” That shows it was not made to eat, I say. Only think of a man in this new world, in his log cabin, in the midst of a corn and potato patch, with a sheepfold on one side, talking about money being hard! So are flints hard; there is no alloy in them. What has that got to do with his raising his food, cutting his wood (or breaking it), keeping indoors when it rains, and, if need be, spinning and weaving his clothes? Some of those who sank with the steamer the other day found out that money was *heavy* too. Think of a man's priding himself on this kind of wealth, as if it greatly enriched him. As if one struggling in mid-ocean with a bag of gold on his back should gasp out, “I am worth a hundred thousand dollars.” I see them struggling just as ineffectually on dry land, nay, even more hopelessly, for, in the former case, rather than sink, they

will finally let the bag go; but in the latter they are pretty sure to hold and go down with it. I see them swimming about in their greatcoats, collecting their rents, really *getting their dues*, drinking bitter draughts which only increase their thirst, becoming more and more water-logged, till finally they sink plumb down to the bottom. But enough of this.

Have you ever read Ruskin's books? If not, I would recommend [you] to try the second and third volumes (not parts) of his "Modern Painters." I am now reading the fourth, and have read most of his other books lately. They are singularly good and encouraging, though not without crudeness and bigotry. The themes in the volumes referred to are Infinity, Beauty, Imagination, Love of Nature, etc., — all treated in a very living manner. I am rather surprised by them. It is remarkable that these things should be said with reference to painting chiefly, rather than literature. The "Seven Lamps of Architecture," too, is made of good stuff; but, as I remember, there is too much about art in it for me and the Hottentots. We want to know about matters and things in general. Our house is as yet a hut.

You must have been enriched by your solitary walk over the mountains. I suppose that I feel the same awe when on their summits that many do on entering a church. To see what kind of earth that is on which you have a house and garden somewhere, perchance! It is equal to the lapse of many years. You must ascend a mountain to learn your relation to matter, and so to your own body, for *it* is at home there, though

you are not. It might have been composed there, and will have no farther to go to return to dust there, than in your garden; but your spirit inevitably comes away, and brings your body with it, if it lives. Just as awful really, and as glorious, is your garden. See how I can play with my fingers! They are the funniest companions I have ever found. Where did they come from? What strange control I have over them! *Who* am I? What are they? — those little peaks — call them Madison, Jefferson, Lafayette. What is *the matter*? *My* fingers, do I say? Why, ere long, they may form the topmost crystal of Mount Washington. I go up there to see my body's cousins. There are some fingers, toes, bowels, etc., that I take an interest in, and therefore I am interested in all their relations.

Let me suggest a theme for you: to state to yourself precisely and completely what that walk over the mountains amounted to for you, — returning to this essay again and again, until you are satisfied that all that was important in your experience is in it. Give this good reason to yourself for having gone over the mountains, for mankind is ever going over a mountain. Don't suppose that you can tell it precisely the first dozen times you try, but at 'em again, especially where, after a sufficient pause, you suspect that you are touching the heart or summit of the matter, reiterate your blows there, and account for the mountain to yourself. Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short. It did not take very long to get over the mountain, you thought; but have you got over it indeed? If you have been to the top of Mount

Washington, let me ask, what did you find there? That is the way they prove witnesses, you know. Going up there and being blown on is nothing. We never do much climbing while we are there, but we eat our luncheon, etc., very much as at home. It is after we get home that we really go over the mountain, if ever. What did the mountain say? What did the mountain do?

I keep a mountain anchored off eastward a little way, which I ascend in my dreams both awake and asleep. Its broad base spreads over a village or two, which does not know it; neither does it know them, nor do I when I ascend it. I can see its general outline as plainly now in my mind as that of Wachusett. I do not invent in the least, but state exactly what I see. I find that I go up it when I am light-footed and earnest. It ever smokes like an altar with its sacrifice. I am not aware that a single villager frequents it or knows of it. I keep this mountain to ride instead of a horse.

Do you not mistake about seeing Moosehead Lake from Mount Washington? That must be about one hundred and twenty miles distant, or nearly twice as far as the Atlantic, which last some doubt if they can see thence. Was it not Umbagog?

Dr. Solger¹ has been lecturing in the vestry in this

¹ Reinhold Solger, Ph. D., — a very intellectual and well-taught Prussian, who was one of the lecturers for a year or two at my "Concord School," the successor of the Concord "Academy," in which the children of the Emerson, Alcott, Hawthorne, Hoar, and Ripley families were taught. At this date the lectures were given in the vestry of the parish church, which Thoreau playfully termed "a meeting-house cellar." It was there that Louisa Alcott acted plays.

town on Geography, to Sanborn's scholars, for several months past, at five P. M. Emerson and Alcott have been to hear him. I was surprised when the former asked me, the other day, if I was not going to hear Dr. Solger. What, to be sitting in a meeting-house cellar at that time of day, when you might possibly be outdoors! I never thought of such a thing. What was the sun made for? If he does not prize daylight, I do. Let him lecture to owls and dormice. He must be a wonderful lecturer indeed who can keep me indoors at such an hour, when the night is coming in which no man can walk.

Are you in want of amusement nowadays? Then play a little at the game of getting a living. There never was anything equal to it. Do it temperately, though, and don't sweat. Don't let this secret out, for I have a design against the Opera. OPERA!! Pass along the exclamations, devil.¹

Now is the time to become conversant with your wood-pile (this comes under Work for the Month), and be sure you put some warmth into it by your mode of getting it. Do not consent to be passively warmed. An intense degree of that is the hotness that is threatened. But a positive warmth within can withstand the fiery furnace, as the vital heat of a living man can withstand the heat that cooks meat.

After returning from the last of his three expeditions to the Maine woods (in 1846, 1853, and 1857), Thoreau was appealed to by his friend Higginson, then

¹ Exclamation points and printer's devil.

living in Worcester, for information concerning a proposed excursion from Worcester into Maine and Canada, then but little visited by tourists, who now go there in droves. He replied in this long letter, with its minute instructions and historical references. The Arnold mentioned is General Benedict Arnold, who in 1775-76 made a toilsome march through the Maine forest with a small New England army for the conquest of Canada, while young John Thoreau, Henry's grandfather, was establishing himself as a merchant in Boston (not yet evacuated by British troops), previous to his marriage with Jane Burns.

TO T. W. HIGGINSON (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, January 28, 1858.

DEAR SIR, — It would be perfectly practicable to go to the Madawaska the way you propose. As for the route to Quebec, I do not find the Sugar Loaf Mountains on my maps. The most direct and regular way, as you know, is substantially Montresor's and Arnold's and the younger John Smith's — by the Chaudière; but this is less wild. If your object is to see the St. Lawrence River below Quebec, you will probably strike it at the Rivière du Loup. (*Vide* Hodge's account of his excursion thither *via* the Allegash, — I believe it is the second Report on the Geology of the Public Lands of Maine and Massachusetts in '37.) I think that our Indian last summer, when we talked of going to the St. Lawrence, named another route, near the Madawaska, — perhaps the St. Francis, — which would save the long portage which Hodge made.

I do not know whether you think of ascending the St. Lawrence in a canoe; but if you should, you might be delayed not only by the current, but by the waves, which frequently run too high for a canoe on such a mighty stream. It would be a grand excursion to go to Quebec by the Chaudière, descend the St. Lawrence to the Rivière du Loup, and return by the Madawaska and St. John to Fredericton, or farther, — almost all the way *down-stream* — a very important consideration.

I went to Moosehead in company with a party of four who were going a-hunting down the Allegash and St. John, and thence by some other stream over into the Restigouche, and down that to the Bay of Chaleur, — to be gone six weeks. Our northern terminus was an island in Heron Lake on the Allegash. (*Vide* Colton's railroad and township map of Maine.)

The Indian proposed that we should return to Bangor by the St. John and Great Schoodic Lake, which we had thought of ourselves; and he showed us on the map where we should be each night. It was then noon, and the next day night, continuing down the Allegash, we should have been at the Madawaska settlements, having made only one or two portages; and thereafter, on the St. John there would be but one or two more falls, with short carries; and if there was not too much wind, we could go down that stream one hundred miles a day. It is settled all the way below Madawaska. He knew the route well. He even said that this was easier, and would take but little more time, though much farther, than the route we decided on, — *i. e.*, by Webster Stream, the East Branch, and main Penob-

scot to Oldtown; but he may have wanted a longer job. We preferred the latter, not only because it was shorter, but because, as he said, it was wilder.

We went about three hundred and twenty-five miles with the canoe (including sixty miles of stage between Bangor and Oldtown); were out twelve nights, and spent about \$40 apiece, — which was more than was necessary. We paid the Indian, who was a very good one, \$1.50 per day and 50 cents a week for his canoe. This is enough in ordinary seasons. I had formerly paid \$2 for an Indian and for white batteau-men.

If you go to Madawaska in a leisurely manner, supposing no delay on account of rain or the violence of the wind, you may reach Mt. Kineo by noon, and have the afternoon to explore it. The next day you may get to the head of the lake before noon, make the portage of two and a half miles over a wooden railroad, and drop down the Penobscot half a dozen miles. The third morning you will perhaps walk half a mile about Pine Stream Falls, while the Indian runs down, — cross the head of Chesuncook, reach the junction of the Caucomgomock and Umbazookskus by noon, and ascend the latter to Umbazookskus Lake that night. If it is low water, you may have to walk and carry a little on the Umbazookskus before entering the lake. The fourth morning you will make the carry of two miles to Mud Pond (Allegash water), — and a very wet carry it is, — and reach Chamberlain Lake by noon, and Heron Lake, perhaps, that night, after a couple of very short carries at the outlet of Chamberlain. At the end of two days more you will probably

be at Madawaska. Of course the Indian *can* paddle twice as far in a day as he commonly does.

Perhaps you would like a few more details. We used (three of us) exactly twenty-six pounds of hard bread, fourteen pounds of pork, three pounds of coffee, twelve pounds of sugar (and could have used more), besides a little tea, Indian meal, and rice, — and plenty of berries and moose-meat. This was faring very luxuriously. I had not formerly carried coffee, sugar, or rice. But for solid food, I decide that it is not worth the while to carry anything but hard bread and pork, whatever your tastes and habits may be. These wear best, and you have no time nor dishes in which to cook anything else. Of course you will take a little Indian meal to fry fish in; and half a dozen lemons also, if you have sugar, will be very refreshing, — for the water is warm.¹

To save time, the sugar, coffee, tea, salt, etc., should be in separate water-tight bags, labeled, and tied with a leathern string; and all the provisions and blankets should be put into two large india-rubber bags, if you can find them water-tight. Ours were not. A four-quart tin pail makes a good kettle for all purposes, and tin

¹ Channing says (*Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist*, new ed., pp. 41, 42): "He made for himself a knapsack, with partitions for his books and papers, — india-rubber cloth (strong and large and spaced, the common knapsacks being unspaced). . . . After trying the merit of cocoa, coffee, water, and the like, tea was put down as the felicity of a walking '*travail*,' — tea plenty, strong, with enough sugar, made in a tin pint cup. . . . He commended every party to carry 'a junk of heavy cake' with plums in it, having found by long experience that after toil it was a capital refreshment."

plates are portable and convenient. Don't forget an india-rubber knapsack, with a large flap, — plenty of dish-cloths, old newspapers, strings, and twenty-five feet of strong cord. Of india-rubber clothing, the most you can wear, if any, is a very light coat, — and that you cannot work in. I could be more particular, — but perhaps have been too much so already.

TO MARSTON WATSON (AT PLYMOUTH).

CONCORD, April 25, 1858.

DEAR SIR, — Your unexpected gift of pear trees reached me yesterday in good condition, and I spent the afternoon in giving them a good setting out; but I fear that this cold weather may hurt them. However, I am inclined to think they are insured, since you have looked on them. It makes one's mouth water to read their names only. From what I hear of the extent of your bounty, if a reasonable part of the trees succeed, this transplanting will make a new era for Concord to date from.

Mine must be a lucky star, for day before yesterday I received a box of mayflowers from Brattleboro, and yesterday morning your pear trees, and at evening a hummingbird's nest from Worcester. This looks like fairy housekeeping.

I discovered two new plants in Concord last winter, the Labrador tea (*Ledum latifolium*), and yew (*Taxis baccata*).

By the way, in January I communicated with Dr. Durkee, whose report on glow-worms I sent you, and it appeared, as I expected, that he (and by his account

Agassiz, Gould, Jackson, and others to whom he showed them) did not consider them a distinct species, but a variety of the common, or *Lampyrus noctiluca*, some of which you got in Lincoln. Durkee, at least, has never seen the last. I told him that I had no doubt about their being a distinct species. His, however, were luminous throughout every part of the body, as those which you sent me were not, while I had them.

Is nature as full of vigor to your eyes as ever, or do you detect some falling off at last? Is the mystery of the hog's bristle cleared up, and with it that of our life? It is the question, to the exclusion of every other interest.

I am sorry to hear of the burning of your woods, but, thank Heaven, your great ponds and your sea cannot be burnt. I love to think of your warm, sandy wood-roads, and your breezy island out in the sea. What a prospect you can get every morning from the hilltop east of your house!¹ I think that even the heathen that

¹ Marston Watson, whose uncle, Edward Watson, with his nephews, owned the "breezy island" where Thoreau had visited his friends (Clark's Island, the only one in Plymouth Bay), had built his own house, "Hillside," on the slope of one of the hills above Plymouth town, and there laid out a fine park and garden, which Thoreau surveyed for him in the autumn of 1854, Alcott and Mr. Watson carrying the chain. For a description of Hillside, see Channing's *Wanderer* (Boston, 1871) and Alcott's *Sonnets and Canzonets* (Boston: Roberts, 1882). It was a villa much visited by Emerson, Alcott, Channing, Thoreau, George Bradford, and the Transcendentalists generally. Mr. Watson graduated at Harvard two years after Thoreau, and in an old diary says, "I remember Thoreau in the college yard (1836) with downcast thoughtful look intent, as if he were searching for something; always in a green coat, — green because the authorities required black, I

I am could say, or sing, or dance, morning prayers there of some kind.

Please remember me to Mrs. Watson, and to the rest of your family who are helping the sun shine yonder.

Of his habits in mountain-climbing, Channing says:¹ "He ascended such hills as Monadnoc by his own path; would lay down his map on the summit and draw a line to the point he proposed to visit below, — perhaps forty miles away on the landscape, and set off bravely to make the 'short-cut.' The lowland people wondered to see him scaling the heights as if he had lost his way, or at his jumping over their cow-yard fences, — asking if he had fallen from the clouds. In a walk like this he always carried his umbrella; and on this Monadnoc trip, when about a mile from the station [in Troy, N. H.], a torrent of rain came down; without the umbrella his books, blankets, maps, and provisions would all have been spoiled, or the morning lost by delay. On the mountain there being a thick, soaking fog, the first object was to camp and make tea. He spent five nights in camp, having built another hut, to get varied views. Flowers, birds, lichens, and the rocks were carefully examined, all parts of the mountain were visited, and

suppose." In a letter he says: "I have always heard the 'Maiden in the East' was Mrs. Watson, — Mary Russell Watson, — and I suppose there is no doubt of it. I may be prejudiced, but I have always thought it one of his best things, — and I have highly valued his lines. I find in my *Dial*, No. 6, I have written six new stanzas in the margin of Friendship, and they are numbered to show how they should run. I think Mrs. Brown gave them to me."

¹ *Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist*, new ed., pp. 42-45.

as accurate a map as could be made by pocket compass was carefully sketched and drawn out, in the five days spent there, — with notes of the striking aerial phenomena, incidents of travel and natural history. The outlook across the valley over to Wachusett, with its thunder-storms and battles in the cloud; the farmers' back-yards in Jaffrey, where the family cotton can be seen bleaching on the grass, but no trace of the pigmy family; the dry, soft air all night, the lack of dew in the morning; the want of water, — a pint being a good deal, — these, and similar things make up some part of such an excursion."

The Monadnock excursion above mentioned began August 4th, and continued five days. Thoreau had previously taken a longer mountain tour with his neighbor and friend Edward Hoar, to which these letters relate, giving the ways and means of the journey, — a memorable one to all concerned.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, June 29, 1858, 8 A. M.

MR. BLAKE, — Edward Hoar and I propose to start for the White Mountains in a covered wagon, with one horse, on the morning of Thursday the 1st of July, intending to explore the mountain-tops botanically, and camp on them at least several times. Will you take a seat in the wagon with us? Mr. Hoar prefers to hire the horse and wagon himself. Let us hear by express, as soon as you can, whether you will join us here by the earliest train on Thursday morning, or Wednesday night. Bring your map of the mountains, and as much

provision for the road as you can, — hard bread, sugar, tea, meat, etc., — for we intend to live like gipsies; also, a blanket and some thick clothes for the mountain-top.

July 1st. Last Monday evening Mr. Edward Hoar said that he thought of going to the White Mountains. I remarked casually that I should like to go well enough if I could afford it. Whereupon he declared that if I would go with him, he would hire a horse and wagon, so that the ride would cost me nothing, and we would explore the mountain-tops *botanically*, camping on them many nights. The next morning I suggested you and Brown's accompanying us in another wagon, and we could all camp and cook, gipsy-like, along the way, — or, perhaps, if the horse could draw us, you would like to bear half the expense of the horse and wagon, and take a seat with us. He liked either proposition, but said that if you would take a seat with us, he would prefer to hire the horse and wagon himself. You could contribute something else if you pleased. Supposing that Brown would be confined, I wrote to you accordingly, by *express* on Tuesday morning, *via* Boston, stating that we should start to-day, suggesting provision, thick clothes, etc., and asking for an answer; but I have not received one. I have just heard that you *may* be at Sterling, and now write to say that we shall still be glad if you will join us at Senter Harbor, where we expect to be next Monday morning. In any case, will you please direct a letter to us there *at once*?

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, June 30, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I am on the point of starting for the White Mountains in a wagon with my neighbor Edward Hoar, and I write to you now rather to apologize for not writing, than to answer worthily your three notes. I thank you heartily for them. You will not care for a little delay in acknowledging them, since your date shows that you can afford to wait. Indeed, my head has been so full of company, etc., that I could not reply to you fitly before, nor can I now.

As for preaching to men these days in the Walden strain, is it of any consequence to preach to an audience of men who *can* fail, or who can be *revived*? There are few beside. Is it any success to interest these parties? If a man has *speculated* and *failed*, he will probably do these things again, in spite of you or me. I confess that it is rare that I rise to sentiment in my relations to men, — ordinarily to a mere patient, or may be wholesome, good-will. I can imagine something more, but the truth compels me to regard the ideal and the actual as two things.

Channing has come, and as suddenly gone, and left a short poem, "Near Home," published (?) or printed by Munroe, which I have hardly had time to glance at. As you may guess, I learn nothing of you from him.

You already foresee my answer to your invitation to make you a summer visit: I am bound for the mountains. But I trust that you have vanquished, ere this,

those dusky demons that seem to lurk around the Head of the River.¹ You know that this warfare is nothing but a kind of nightmare, and it is our thoughts alone which give those *unworthies* any body or existence.

I made an excursion with Blake, of Worcester, to Monadnock, a few weeks since. We took our blankets and food, spent two nights on the mountain, and did not go into a house.

Alcott has been very busy for a long time repairing an old shell of a house, and I have seen very little of him.² I have looked more at the houses which birds build. Watson made us all very generous presents from his nursery in the spring. Especially did he remember Alcott.

Excuse me for not writing any more at present, and remember me to your family.

In explanation of the next letter (October 31, 1858), it may be said that Ricketson had formed a plan for visiting Europe, which he gave up, and had recommended an "English Australian" who proposed to see Concord. In Thoreau's reply, he mentions Mr. Hoar, who was not only his companion in later journeys, but, while in college or the Harvard Law School, had assisted Thoreau in that accidental forest fire, mentioned in the Journal, which brought both the young men into

¹ Near which, at New Bedford, Mr. Ricketson lived.

² This was the "Orchard House," near Hawthorne's "Wayside." The estate on which it stands, now owned by Mrs. Lothrop, who also owns the "Wayside," was surveyed for Mr. Alcott by Thoreau in October, 1857.

much disrepute among the Concord farmers and owners of wood-lots. At the date of the letter, Channing was flitting between New Bedford and Concord, and soon returned to spend the rest of his days in Thoreau's town, where he died, December 23, 1901, the last survivor of the group of friends to whom these letters relate.

In July, 1858, as mentioned in this letter to Mr. Ricketson, Thoreau journeyed from Concord to the White Mountains, first visited with his brother John in 1839. His later companion was Edward Hoar, a botanist and lover of nature, who had been a magistrate in California, and in boyhood a comrade of Thoreau in shooting excursions on the Concord meadows. They journeyed in a wagon and Thoreau disliked the loss of independence in choice of camping-places involved in the care of a horse. He complained also of the magnificent inns ("mountain houses") that had sprung up in the passes and on the plateaus since his first visit. "Give me," he said, "a spruce house made in the rain," such as he and Channing afterward (1860) made on Monadnock in his last trip to that mountain. The chief exploit in the White Mountain trip was a visit to Tuckerman's Ravine on Mt. Washington, of which Mr. Hoar, some years before his death (in 1893), gave me an account, containing the true anecdote of Thoreau's finding the arnica plant when he needed it.

On their way to this rather inaccessible chasm, Thoreau and his comrade went first to what was then but a small tavern on the "tip-top" of Mt. Washington. It was a foggy day; and when the landlord was asked

if he could furnish a guide to Tuckerman's Ravine, he replied, "Yes, my brother is the guide; but if he went to-day he could never find his way back in this fog." "Well," said Thoreau, "if we cannot have a guide we will find it ourselves;" and he at once produced a map he had made the day before at a roadside inn, where he had found a wall map of the mountain region, and climbed on a table to copy that portion he needed. With this map and his pocket compass he "struck a bee-line," said Mr. Hoar, for the ravine, and soon came to it, about a mile away. They went safely down the steep stairs into the chasm, where they found the midsummer iceberg they wished to see. But as they walked down the bed of the Peabody River, flowing from this ravine, over boulders five or six feet high, the heavy packs on their shoulders weighed them down, and finally, Thoreau's foot slipping, he fell and sprained his ankle. He rose, but had not limped five steps from the place where he fell, when he said, "Here is the arnica, anyhow," — reached out his hand and plucked the *Arnica mollis*, which he had not before found anywhere. Before reaching the mountains they had marked in their botany books forty-six species of plants they hoped to find there, and before they came away they had found forty-two of them.

When they reached their camping-place, farther down, Thoreau was so lame he could not move about, and lay there in the camp several days, eating the pork and other supplies they had in their packs, Mr. Hoar going each day to the inn at the mountain summit. This camp was in a thicket of dwarf firs at the foot of the

ravine, where, just before his accident, by carelessness in lighting a fire, some acres of the mountain woodland had been set on fire; but this proved to be the signal for which Thoreau had told his Worcester friends to watch, if they wished to join him on the mountain. "I had told Blake," says Thoreau in his Journal, "to look out for a smoke and a white tent. We had made a smoke sure enough. We slept five in the tent that night, and found it quite warm." Mr. Hoar added: "In this journey Thoreau insisted on our carrying heavy packs, and rather despised persons who complained of the burden. He was chagrined, in the Maine woods, to find his Indian, Joe Polis (whom, on the whole, he admired), excited and tremulous at sight of a moose, so that he could scarcely load his gun properly. Joe, who was a good Catholic, wanted us to stop traveling on Sunday and hold a meeting; and when we insisted on going forward, the Indian withdrew into the woods to say his prayers, — then came back and picked up the breakfast things, and we paddled on. As to Thoreau's courage and manliness, nobody who had seen him among the Penobscot rocks and rapids — the Indian trusting his life and his canoe to Henry's skill, promptitude, and nerve — would ever doubt it."

Channing says:¹ "In his later journeys, if his companion was footsore or loitered, he steadily pursued his

¹ Channing's *Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist*, new ed., pp. 6, 15, 16. Channing himself was, no doubt, the "follower" and "companion" here mentioned; no person so frequently walked with Thoreau in his long excursions. They were together in New Boston, N. H., when the minister mentioned in the *Week* reproved Thoreau for not going to meeting on Sunday. When I first lived in Concord (March,

road. Once, when a follower was done up with headache and incapable of motion, hoping his associate would comfort him and perhaps afford him a sip of tea, he said, 'There are people who are sick in that way every morning, and go about their affairs,' and then marched off about his. In such limits, so inevitable, was he compacted. . . . This tone of mind grew out of no insensibility; or, if he sometimes looked coldly on the suffering of more tender natures, he sympathized with their afflictions, but could do nothing to admire them. He would not injure a plant unnecessarily. At the time of the John Brown tragedy, Thoreau was driven sick. So the country's misfortunes in the Union war acted on his feelings with great force: he used to say he 'could never recover while the war lasted.'” Hawthorne had an experience somewhat similar, though he, too, was of stern stuff when need was, and had much of the old Salem sea-captains in his sensitive nature.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 31, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I have not seen anything of your English author yet. Edward Hoar, my companion in Maine and at the White Mountains, his sister Elizabeth, and a Miss Prichard, another neighbor of ours, went to Europe in the Niagara on the 6th. I told them

1855), and asked the innkeeper what Sunday services the village held, he replied, "There's the Orthodox, an' the Unitarian, an' th' Walden Pond Association," — meaning by the last what Emerson called "the Walkers," — those who rambled in the Walden woods on Sundays.

to look out for you under the Yardley Oak, but it seems they will not find you there.

I had a pleasant time in Tuckerman's Ravine at the White Mountains in July, entertaining four beside myself under my little tent through some soaking rains; and more recently I have taken an interesting walk with Channing about Cape Ann. We were obliged to "dipper it" a good way, on account of the scarcity of fresh water, for we got most of our meals by the shore. Channing is understood to be here for the winter, but I rarely see him.

I should be pleased to see your face here in the course of the Indian summer, which may still be expected, if any authority can tell us when that phenomenon *does* occur. We would like to hear the story of your travels; for if you have not been fairly intoxicated with Europe, you have been half-seas-over. and so can probably tell more about it.

This alludes to the fact that Ricketson got as far as Halifax in his attempt at Europe; and in his reply (November 3, 1858) he gave Thoreau an account of his short voyage, on which the next letter comments.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, November 6, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I was much pleased with your lively and lifelike account of your voyage. You were more than repaid for your trouble after all. The coast of Nova Scotia, which you sailed along from Windsor westward, is particularly interesting to the historian of

this country, having been settled earlier than Plymouth. Your "Isle of Haut" is properly "Isle Haute," or the High Island of Champlain's map. There is another off the coast of Maine. By the way, the American elk of *American authors* (*Cervus Canadensis*) is a distinct animal from the moose (*Cervus alces*), though the latter is called elk by many.

You drew a very vivid portrait of the Australian, — short and stout, with a pipe in his mouth, and his book inspired by beer, Pot First, Pot Second, etc. I suspect that he must be potbellied withal. Methinks I see the smoke going up from him as from a cottage on the moor. If he does not quench his genius with his beer, it may burst into a clear flame at last. However, perhaps he intentionally adopts the low style.

What do you mean by that ado about smoking, and my "purer tastes"? I should like his pipe as well as his beer at least. Neither of them is so bad as to be "highly connected," which you say he is, unfortunately. No! I expect nothing but pleasure in "smoke from *your* pipe."

You and the Australian must have put your heads together when you concocted those titles, — with pipes in your mouths over a pot of beer. I suppose that your chapters are, Whiff the First, Whiff the Second, etc. But of course it is a more modest expression for "Fire from my Genius."

You must have been very busy since you came back, or before you sailed, to have brought out your History, of whose publication I had not heard. I suppose that I have read it in the *Mercury*. Yet I am curious to

see how it looks in a volume, with your name on the title-page.

I am more curious still about the poems. Pray put some sketches into the book: your shanty for frontispiece; Arthur and Walton's boat (if you can) running for Cuttyhunk in a tremendous gale; not forgetting "Be honest boys," etc., near by; the Middleborough ponds with a certain island looming in the distance; the Quaker meeting-house, and the Brady house, if you like; the villagers catching smelts with dip-nets in the twilight, at the Head of the River, etc., etc. Let it be a local and villageous book as much as possible. Let some one make a characteristic selection of mottoes from your shanty walls, and sprinkle them in an irregular manner, at all angles, over the fly-leaves and margins, as a man stamps his name in a hurry; and also canes, pipes, and jackknives, of all your patterns, about the frontispiece. I can think of plenty of devices for tail-pieces. Indeed, I should like to see a hair pillow, accurately drawn, for one; a cat, with a bell on, for another; the old horse, with his age printed in the hollow of his back; half a cocoanut-shell by a spring; a sheet of blotted paper; a settle occupied by a settler at full length, etc., etc., etc. Call all the arts to your aid.

Don't wait for the Indian summer, but bring it with you.

P. S. — Let me ask a favor. I am trying to write something about the autumnal tints, and I wish to know how much our trees differ from English and European ones in this respect. Will you observe, or

learn for me, what English or European trees, if any, still retain their leaves in Mr. Arnold's garden (the gardener will supply the true names); and also if the foliage of any (and what) European or foreign trees there have been brilliant the past month. If you will do this you will greatly oblige me. I return the newspaper with this.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, November 22, 1858.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I thank you for your "History."¹ Though I have not yet read it again, I have looked far enough to see that I like the homeliness of it; that is, the good, old-fashioned way of writing, as if you actually lived where you wrote. A man's interest in a single bluebird is worth more than a complete but dry list of the fauna and flora of a town. It is also a considerable advantage to be able to say at any time, "If D. R. is not here, here is his book." Alcott being here, and inquiring after you (whom he has been expecting), I lent the book to him almost immediately. He talks of going West the latter part of this week. Channing is here again, as I am told, but I have not seen him.

I thank you also for the account of the trees. It was to my purpose, and I hope you got something out of it too. I suppose that the cold weather prevented your coming here. Suppose you try a winter walk on skates. Please remember me to your family.

¹ Of New Bedford, first published in the *Mercury* of that city, while Channing was one of the editors, and afterwards in a volume.

Late in November, 1858, Cholmondeley, who had not written for a year and six months, suddenly notified Thoreau from Montreal that he was in Canada, and would visit Concord the next week. Accordingly he arrived early in December, and urged his friend to go with him to the West Indies. John Thoreau, the father, was then in his last illness, and for that and other reasons Thoreau could not accept the invitation; but he detained Cholmondeley in Concord some days, and took him to New Bedford, December 8th, having first written this note to Mr. Ricketson:—

“Thomas Cholmondeley, my English acquaintance, is here, on his way to the West Indies. He wants to see New Bedford, a whaling town. I tell him I would like to introduce him to you there, — thinking more of his seeing you than New Bedford. So we propose to come your way to-morrow. Excuse this short notice, for the time is short. If on any account it is inconvenient to see us, you will treat us accordingly.”

Of this visit and his English visitor, Mr. Ricketson wrote in his journal the next day:—

“We were all much pleased with Mr. Cholmondeley. He is a tall spare man, thirty-five years of age, of fair and fresh complexion, blue eyes, light-brown and fine hair, nose small and Roman, beard light and worn full, with a mustache. A man of fine culture and refinement of manners, educated at Oriel College, Oxford, of an old Cheshire family by his father, a clergyman. He wore a black velvet sack coat, and lighter-colored trousers, — a sort of genteel traveling suit; perhaps a cap, but by no means a fashionable ‘castor.’ He re-

minded me of our dear friend, George William Curtis." Few greater compliments could this diarist give than to compare a visitor to Curtis, the lamented.

Mr. Cholmondeley left Concord for the South, going as far as to Virginia, in December and January; then came back to Concord the 20th of January, 1859, and after a few days returned to Canada, and thence to England by way of Jamaica. He was in London when Theodore Parker reached there from Santa Cruz, in June, and called on him, with offers of service; but does not seem to have heard of Parker's death till I wrote him in May, 1861. At my parting with him in Concord, he gave me money with which to buy grapes for the invalid father of Thoreau, — an instance of his constant consideration for others; the Thoreaus hardly affording such luxuries as hothouse grapes for the sick. Sophia Thoreau, who perhaps was more appreciative of him than her more stoical brother, said after his death, "We have always had the truest regard for him, as a person of rare integrity, great benevolence, and the sincerest friendliness." This well describes the man whose every-day guise was literally set down by Mr. Ricketson.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, January 1, 1859.

MR. BLAKE, — It may interest you to hear that Cholmondeley has been this way again, *via* Montreal and Lake Huron, going to the West Indies, or rather to Weiss-nicht-wo, whither he urges me to accompany him. He is rather more demonstrative than before,

and, on the whole, what would be called “a good fellow,” — is a man of principle, and quite reliable, but very peculiar. I have been to New Bedford with him, to show him a whaling town and Ricketson. I was glad to hear that you had called on R. How did you like him? I suspect that you did not see one another fairly.

I have lately got back to that glorious society called Solitude, where we meet our friends continually, and can imagine the outside world also to be peopled. Yet some of my acquaintance would fain hustle me into the almshouse for *the sake of society*, as if I were pining for that diet, when I seem to myself a most befriended man, and find constant employment. However, they do not believe a word I say. They have got a club, the handle of which is in the Parker House at Boston, and with this they beat me from time to time, expecting to make me tender or minced meat, so fit for a club to dine off.

“Hercules with his club
The Dragon did drub;
But More of More Hall
With nothing at all,
He slew the Dragon of Wantley.”

Ah! that More of More Hall knew what fair play was. Channing, who wrote to me about it once, brandishing the club vigorously (being set on by another, probably), says *now*, seriously, that he is sorry to find by my letters that I am “absorbed in politics,” and adds, begging my pardon for his plainness, “Beware of an extraneous life!” and so he does his duty, and washes

his hands of me. I tell him that it is as if he should say to the sloth, that fellow that creeps so slowly along a tree, and cries *ai* from time to time, "Beware of dancing!"

The doctors are all agreed that I am suffering for want of society. Was never a case like it. First, I did not know that I was suffering at all. Secondly, as an Irishman might say, I had thought it was indigestion of the society I got.

As for the Parker House, I went there once, when the Club¹ was away, but I found it hard to see through the cigar smoke, and men were deposited about in chairs over the marble floor, as thick as legs of bacon in a smoke-house. It was all smoke, and no salt, Attic or other. The only room in Boston which I visit with alacrity is the Gentlemen's Room at the Fitchburg Depot, where I wait for the cars, sometimes for two hours, in order to get out of town. It is a paradise to the Parker House, for no smoking is allowed, and there is far more retirement. A large and respectable club of us hire it (Town and Country Club), and I am pretty

¹ The club with which Thoreau here makes merry was the Saturday Club, meeting at Parker's Hotel in Boston the last Saturday in each month, of which Emerson, Agassiz, Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, Henry James, and other men of letters were members. Thoreau, though invited, never seems to have met with them, as Channing did, on one memorable occasion, at least, described by Mr. James in a letter cited in the *Memoir of Bronson Alcott*, who also occasionally dined with this club. The conversation at Emerson's next mentioned was also memorable for the vigor with which Miss Mary Emerson, then eighty-four years old, rebuked Mr. James for what she thought his dangerous Antinomian views concerning the moral law.

sure to find some one there whose face is set the same way as my own.

My last essay, on which I am still engaged, is called "Autumnal Tints." I do not know how readable (*i. e.*, by me to others) it will be.

I met Mr. James the other night at Emerson's, at an Alcottian conversation, at which, however, Alcott did not talk much, being disturbed by James's opposition. The latter is a hearty man enough, with whom you can differ very satisfactorily, on account of both his doctrines and his good temper. He utters *quasi* philanthropic dogmas in a metaphysic dress ; but they are for all practical purposes very crude. He charges society with all the crime committed, and praises the criminal for committing it. But I think that all the remedies he suggests out of his head — for he goes no farther, hearty as he is — would leave us about where we are now. For, of course, it is not by a gift of turkeys on Thanksgiving Day that he proposes to convert the criminal, but by a true sympathy with each one, — with him, among the rest, who lyingly tells the world from the gallows that he has never been treated kindly by a single mortal since he was born. But it is not so easy a thing to sympathize with another, though you may have the best disposition to do it. There is Dobson over the hill. Have not you and I and all the world been trying, ever since he was born, to sympathize with him ? (as doubtless he with us), and yet we have got no farther than to send him to the house of correction once at least ; and he, on the other hand, as I hear, has sent us to another place several times. This is the real state of

things, as I understand it, at least so far as James's remedies go. We are now, alas! exercising what charity we actually have, and new laws would not give us any more. But, perchance, we might make some improvements in the house of correction. You and I are Dobson; what will James do for us?

Have you found at last in your wanderings a place where the solitude is sweet?

What mountain are you camping on nowadays? Though I had a good time at the mountains, I confess that the journey did not bear any fruit that I know of. I did not expect it would. The mode of it was not simple and adventurous enough. You must first have made an infinite demand, and not unreasonably, but after a corresponding outlay, have an all-absorbing purpose, and at the same time that your feet bear you hither and thither, travel much more in imagination.

To let the mountains slide, — live at home like a traveler. It should not be in vain that these things are shown us from day to day. Is not each withered leaf that I see in my walks something which I have traveled to find? — traveled, who can tell how far? What a fool he must be who thinks that his El Dorado is anywhere but where he lives!

We are always, methinks, in some kind of ravine, though our bodies may walk the smooth streets of Worcester. Our souls (I use this word for want of a better) are ever perched on its rocky sides, overlooking that lowland. (What a more than Tuckerman's Ravine is the body itself, in which the "soul" is encamped, when you come to look into it! However,

eagles always have chosen such places for their eyries.)

Thus is it ever with your fair cities of the plain. Their streets may be paved with silver and gold, and six carriages roll abreast in them, but the real *homes* of the citizens are in the Tuckerman's Ravines which ray out from that centre into the mountains round about, one from each man, woman, and child. The masters of life have so ordered it. That is their *beau-ideal* of a country-seat. There is no danger of being *tuckered* out before you get to it.

So we live in Worcester and in Concord, each man taking his exercise regularly in his ravine, like a lion in his cage, and sometimes spraining his ankle there. We have very few clear days, and a great many small plagues which keep us busy. Sometimes, I suppose, you hear a neighbor halloo (Brown, maybe) and think it is a bear. Nevertheless, on the whole, we think it very grand and exhilarating, this ravine life. It is a capital advantage withal, living so high, the excellent drainage of that city of God. Routine is but a shallow and insignificant sort of ravine, such as the ruts are, the conduits of puddles. But these ravines are the source of mighty streams, precipitous, icy, savage, as they are, haunted by bears and loup-cerviers; there are born not only Sacos and Amazons, but prophets who will redeem the world. The at last smooth and fertilizing water at which nations drink and navies supply themselves begins with melted glaciers, and burst thunder-spouts. Let us pray that, if we are not flowing through some Mississippi valley which we fertilize, — and it is not

likely we are, — we may know ourselves shut in between grim and mighty mountain walls amid the clouds, falling a thousand feet in a mile, through dwarfed fir and spruce, over the rocky insteps of slides, being exercised in our minds, and so developed.

CONCORD, January 19, 1859.

MR. BLAKE, — If I could have given a favorable report as to the skating, I should have answered you earlier. About a week before you wrote there was good skating; there is now none. As for the lecture, I shall be glad to come. I cannot now say when, but I will let you know, I think within a week or ten days at most, and will then leave you a week clear to make the arrangements in. I will bring something else than “What shall it profit a Man?” My father is very sick, and has been for a long time, so that there is the more need of me at home. This occurs to me, even when contemplating so short an excursion as to Worcester.

I want very much to see or hear your account of your adventures in the Ravine,¹ and I trust I shall do so when I come to Worcester. Cholmondeley has been here again, returning from Virginia (for he went no farther south) to Canada; and will go thence to Europe, he thinks, in the spring, and never ramble any more. (January 29.) I am expecting daily that my father will die, therefore I cannot leave home at present. I will write you again within ten days.

¹ This was Tuckerman's Ravine at the White Mountains, where Thoreau met with his mishap in the preceding July.

The death of John Thoreau (who was born October 8, 1787) occurred February 3d, and Thoreau gave his lecture on "Autumnal Tints" at Worcester, February 22, 1859. Mrs. Thoreau survived all her children except Sophia, and died in 1872.

At his father's death, Thoreau sent a newspaper announcement of it to Ricketson, who had already seen it mentioned by Channing in the *Mercury*. Ricketson at once wrote, to pay his tribute to the character of the elder Thoreau, saying: "I have rarely met a man who inspired me with more respect. I remember with pleasure a ramble I took with him about Concord some two or three years ago, at a time when you were away from home; on which occasion I was much impressed with his good sense, his fine social nature, and his genuine hospitality." Of this remark Thoreau took notice in his interesting reply.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, 12th February, 1859.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I thank you for your kind letter. I sent you the notice of my father's death as much because you knew him as because you knew me. I can hardly realize that he is dead. He had been sick about two years, and at last declined rather rapidly, though steadily. Till within a week or ten days before he died he was hoping to see another spring, but he then discovered that this was a vain expectation, and, thinking that he was dying, he took his leave of us several times within a week before his departure. Once or twice he expressed a slight impatience at the delay. He was

quite conscious to the last, and his death was so easy that, though we had all been sitting around the bed for an hour or more expecting that event (as we had sat before), he was gone at last, almost before we were aware of it.

I am glad to read what you say of his social nature. I think I may say that he was wholly unpretending; and there was this peculiarity in his aim, that though he had pecuniary difficulties to contend with the greater part of his life, he always studied how to make a *good* article, pencil or other (for he practiced various arts), and was never satisfied with what he had produced. Nor was he ever disposed in the least to put off a poor one for the sake of pecuniary gain, — as if he labored for a higher end.

Though he was not very old, and was not a native of Concord, I think that he was, on the whole, more identified with Concord street than any man now alive, having come here when he was about twelve years old, and set up for himself as a merchant here, at the age of twenty-one, fifty years ago. As I sat in a circle the other evening with my mother and sister, my mother's two sisters, and my father's two sisters, it occurred to me that my father, though seventy-one, belonged to the youngest four of the eight who recently composed our family.

How swiftly at last, but unnoticed, a generation passes away! Three years ago I was called with my father to be a witness to the signing of our neighbor Mr. Frost's will. Mr. Samuel Hoar, who was there writing it, also signed it. I was lately required to go to

Cambridge to testify to the genuineness of the will, being the only one of the four who could be there, and now I am the only one alive.

My mother and sister thank you heartily for your sympathy. The latter, in particular, agrees with you in thinking that it is communion with still living and healthy nature alone which can restore to sane and cheerful views. I thank you for your invitation to New Bedford, but I feel somewhat confined here for the present.

I did not know but we should see you the day after Alger was here. It is not too late for a winter walk in Concord. It does me good to hear of spring birds, and singing ones too,—for spring seems far away from Concord yet. I am going to Worcester to read a parlor lecture on the 22d, and shall see Blake and Brown. What if you were to meet me there, or go with me from here? You would see them to good advantage. Cholmondeley has been here again, after going as far south as Virginia, and left for Canada about three weeks ago. He is a good soul, and I am afraid I did not sufficiently recognize him.

Please remember me to Mrs. Ricketson, and to the rest of your family.

A long silence had passed on Thoreau's part before he wrote again to Ricketson, — nearly two years, in fact, — and his friend complained of it. He had followed the public utterances of Thoreau with entire sympathy, although much in advance, in 1859–60, of public opinion respecting John Brown and slavery, and he had

sent him letters and complimentary verses. Finally, he almost implored Thoreau to renew the bond of friendship. This will explain the tenor of Thoreau's reply.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, November 4, 1860.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I thank you for the verses. They are quite too good to apply to me. However, I know what a poet's license is, and will not get in the way.

But what do you mean by that prose? Why will you waste so many regards on me, and not know what to think of my silence? Infer from it what you might from the silence of a dense pine wood. It is its natural condition, except when the winds blow, and the jays scream, and the chickadee winds up his clock. My silence is just as inhuman as that, and no more. You know that I never promised to correspond with you, and so, when I do, I do more than I promised.

Such are my pursuits and habits that I rarely go abroad; and it is quite a habit with me to decline invitations to do so. Not that I could not enjoy such visits, if I were not otherwise occupied. I have enjoyed very much my visits to you, and my rides in your neighborhood, and am sorry that I cannot enjoy such things oftener; but life is short, and there are other things also to be done. I admit that you are more social than I am and far more attentive to "the common courtesies of life;" but this is partly for the reason that you have fewer or less exacting private pursuits.

Not to have written a note for a year is with me a

very venial offense. I think that I do not correspond with any one so often as once in six months.

I have a faint recollection of your invitation referred to; but I suppose that I had no new nor particular reason for declining, and so made no new statement. I have felt that you would be glad to see me almost whenever I got ready to come; but I only offer myself as a rare visitor, and a still rarer correspondent.

I am very busy, after my fashion, little as there is to show for it, and feel as if I could not spend many days nor dollars in traveling; for the shortest visit must have a fair margin to it, and the days thus affect the weeks, you know. Nevertheless, we cannot forego these luxuries altogether. You must not regard me as a regular diet, but at most only as acorns, which, too, are not to be despised, — which, at least, we love to think are edible in a bracing walk. We have got along pretty well together in several directions, though we are such strangers in others.

I hardly know what to say in answer to your letter. Some are accustomed to write many letters, others very few. I am one of the last. At any rate, we are pretty sure, if we write at all, to send those thoughts which we cherish, to that one who, we believe, will most religiously attend to them.

This life is not for complaint, but for satisfaction. I do not feel addressed by this letter of yours. It suggests only misunderstanding. Intercourse may be good; but of what use are complaints and apologies? Any complaint *I* have to make is too serious to be uttered, for the evil cannot be mended.

Turn over a new leaf.

My outdoor harvest this fall has been one Canada lynx, a fierce-looking fellow, which, it seems, we have hereabouts; eleven barrels of apples from trees of my own planting; and a large crop of white oak acorns, which I did not raise.

Please remember me to your family. I have a very pleasant recollection of your fireside, and I trust that I shall revisit it; — also of your shanty and the surrounding regions.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, September 26, 1859.

MR. BLAKE, — I am not sure that I am in a fit mood to write to you, for I feel and think rather too much like a business man, having some very irksome affairs to attend to these months and years on account of my family.¹ This is the way I am serving King Admetus, confound him! If it were not for my relations, I would let the wolves prey on his flocks to their bellies' content. Such fellows you have to deal with! herdsmen of some other king, or of the same, who tell no tale, but in the sense of counting their flocks, and then lie drunk under a hedge. How is your grist ground? Not by some murmuring stream, while you lie dreaming on the bank; but, it seems, you must take hold with your hands, and

¹ He was looking after the manufacture of fine plumbago for the electrotypers, which was the family business after pencil-making grew unprofitable. The Thoreaus had a grinding-mill in Acton, and a packing-shop attached to their Concord house. "Parker's society," mentioned at the close of the letter, was the congregation of Theodore Parker, then in Italy, where he died in May, 1860.

shove the wheel round. You can't depend on streams, poor feeble things! You can't depend on worlds, left to themselves; but you've got to oil them and goad them along. In short, you've got to carry on two farms at once, — the farm on the earth and the farm in your mind. Those Crimean and Italian battles were mere boys' play, — they are the scrapes into which truants get. But what a battle a man must fight everywhere to maintain his standing army of thoughts, and march with them in orderly array through the always hostile country! How many enemies there are to sane thinking! Every soldier has succumbed to them before he enlists for those other battles. Men may sit in chambers, seemingly safe and sound, and yet despair, and turn out at last only hollowness and dust within, like a Dead Sea apple. A standing army of numerous, brave, and well-disciplined thoughts, and you at the head of them, marching straight to your goal, — how to bring this about is the problem, and Scott's Tactics will not help you to it. Think of a poor fellow begirt only with a sword-belt, and no such staff of athletic thoughts! his brains rattling as he walks and *talks*! These are your prætorian guard. It is easy enough to maintain a family, or a state, but it is hard to maintain these children of your brain (or say, rather, these guests that trust to enjoy your hospitality), they make such great demands; and yet, he who does only the former, and loses the power to *think* originally, or as only he ever can, fails miserably. Keep up the fires of thought, and all will go well.

Zouaves? — pish! How you can overrun a country,

climb any rampart, and carry any fortress, with an army of *alert* thoughts! — thoughts that send their bullets home to heaven's door, — with which you can *take* the whole world, without paying for it, or robbing anybody. See, the conquering hero comes! You *fail* in your thoughts, or you *prevail* in your thoughts only. Provided you *think* well, the heavens falling, or the earth gaping, will be the music for you to march by. No foe can ever see you, or you him; you cannot so much as *think* of him. Swords have no edges, bullets no penetration, for such a contest. In your mind must be a liquor which will dissolve the world whenever it is dropt in it. There is no universal solvent but this, and all things together cannot saturate it. It will hold the universe in solution, and yet be as translucent as ever. The vast machine may indeed roll over our toes, and we not know it, but it would rebound and be staved to pieces like an empty barrel, if it should strike fair and square on the smallest and least angular of a man's thoughts.

You seem not to have taken Cape Cod the right way. I think that you should have persevered in walking on the beach and on the bank, even to the land's end, however soft, and so, by long knocking at Ocean's gate, have gained admittance at last, — better, if separately, and in a storm, not knowing where you would sleep by night, or eat by day. Then you should have given a day to the sand behind Provincetown, and ascended the hills there, and been blown on considerably. I hope that you like to remember the journey better than you did to make it.

I have been confined at home all this year, but I am not aware that I have grown any rustier than was to be expected. One while I explored the bottom of the river pretty extensively. I have engaged to read a lecture to Parker's society on the 9th of October next.

I am off — a-barbering.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, October 31, 1859.

MR. BLAKE, — I spoke to my townsmen last evening on "The Character of Captain Brown, now in the Clutches of the Slaveholder." I should like to speak to any company at Worcester who may wish to hear me; and will come if only my expenses are paid. I think we should express ourselves at once, while Brown is alive. The sooner the better. Perhaps Higginson may like to have a meeting. Wednesday evening would be a good time. The people here are deeply interested in the matter. Let me have an answer as soon as may be.

P. S. — I may be engaged toward the end of the week.

HENRY D. THOREAU.

This address on John Brown was one of the first public utterances in favor of that hero; it was made up mainly from the entries in Thoreau's journals, since I had introduced Brown to him, and he to Emerson, in March, 1857; and especially from those pages that Thoreau had written after the news of Brown's capture in Virginia had reached him. It was first given in the

vestry of the old parish church in Concord (where, in 1774, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts had met to prepare for armed resistance to British tyranny); was repeated at Worcester the same week, and before a great audience in Boston, the following Sunday, — after which it was published in the newspapers, and had a wide reading. Mr. Alcott in his diary mentions it under date of Sunday, October 30, thus: “Thoreau reads a paper on John Brown, his virtues, spirit, and deeds, this evening, and to the delight of his company, — the best that could be gathered at short notice, — and among them Emerson. (November 4.) Thoreau calls and reports about the reading of his lecture on Brown at Boston and Worcester. He has been the first to speak and celebrate the hero’s courage and magnanimity; it is these that he discerns and praises. The men have much in common, — the sturdy manliness, straightforwardness, and independence. (November 5.) Ricketson from New Bedford arrives; he and Thoreau take supper with us. Thoreau talks freely and enthusiastically about Brown, — denouncing the Union, the President, the States, and Virginia particularly; wishes to publish his late speech, and has seen Boston publishers, but failed to find any to print it for him.” It was soon after published, along with Emerson’s two speeches in favor of Brown, by a new Boston publishing house (Thayer & Eldridge), in a volume called “Echoes of Harper’s Ferry,” edited by the late James Redpath, Brown’s first biographer. In the following summer, Thoreau sent a second paper on Brown (written soon after his execution) to be read at a commemoration of

the martyr, beside his grave among the Adirondack Mountains. This is mentioned in his letter to Sophia Thoreau, July 8, 1860. He took an active part in arranging for the funeral service in honor of Brown, at Concord, the day of his death, December 2, 1859.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 20, 1860.

MR. BLAKE, — I must endeavor to pay some of my debts to you. To begin where we left off, then.

The presumption is that *we* are always the same; our opportunities, and Nature herself, fluctuating. Look at mankind. No great difference between two, apparently; perhaps the same height, and breadth, and weight; and yet, to the man who sits most east, this life is a weariness, routine, dust and ashes, and he drowns his imaginary *cares* (!) (a sort of friction among his vital organs) in a bowl. But to the man who sits most west, his *contemporary* (!), it is a field for all noble endeavors, an elysium, the dwelling-place of heroes and demigods. The former complains that he has a thousand affairs to attend to; but he does not realize that his affairs (though they may be a thousand) and he are one.

Men and boys are learning all kinds of trades but how to make *men* of themselves. They learn to make houses; but they are not so well housed. they are not so contented in their houses, as the woodchucks in their holes. What is the use of a house if you have n't got a tolerable planet to put it on? — if you cannot tolerate the planet it is on? Grade the ground first. If a man

believes and expects great things of himself, it makes no odds where you put him, or what you show him (of course *you* cannot put him anywhere, nor show him anything), he will be surrounded by grandeur. He is in the condition of a healthy and hungry man, who says to himself, — How sweet this crust is! If he despairs of himself, then Tophet is his dwelling-place, and he is in the condition of a sick man who is disgusted with the fruits of finest flavor.

Whether he sleeps or wakes, — whether he runs or walks, — whether he uses a microscope or a telescope, or his naked eye, — a man never discovers anything, never overtakes anything, or leaves anything behind, but himself. Whatever he says or does, he merely reports himself. If he is in love, he *loves*; if he is in heaven, he *enjoys*; if he is in hell, he *suffers*. It is his condition that determines his locality.

The principal, the only, thing a man makes, is his condition of fate. Though commonly he does not know it, nor put up a sign to this effect, “My own destiny made and mended here.” (Not *yours*.) He is a master workman in the business. He works twenty-four hours a day at it, and gets it done. Whatever else he neglects or botches, no man was ever known to neglect this work. A great many pretend to make *shoes* chiefly, and would scout the idea that they make the hard times which they experience.

Each reaching and aspiration is an instinct with which all nature consists and coöperates, and therefore it is not in vain. But alas! each relaxing and desperation is an instinct too. To be active, well, happy, im-

plies rare courage. To be ready to fight in a duel or a battle implies desperation, or that you hold your life cheap.

If you take this life to be simply what old religious folks pretend (I mean the effete, gone to seed in a drought, mere human galls stung by the devil once), then all your joy and serenity is reduced to grinning and bearing it. The fact is, you have got to take the world on your shoulders like Atlas, and "put along" with it. You will do this for an idea's sake, and your success will be in proportion to your devotion to ideas. It may make your back ache occasionally, but you will have the satisfaction of hanging it or twirling it to suit yourself. Cowards suffer, heroes enjoy. After a long day's walk with it, pitch it into a hollow place, sit down and eat your luncheon. Unexpectedly, by some immortal thoughts, you will be compensated. The bank whereon you sit will be a fragrant and flowery one, and your world in the hollow a sleek and light gazelle.

Where is the "unexplored land" but in our own untried enterprises? To an adventurous spirit any place — London, New York, Worcester, or his own yard — is "unexplored land," to seek which Frémont and Kane travel so far. To a sluggish and defeated spirit even the Great Basin and the Polaris are trivial places. If they can get there (and, indeed, they are there now), they will want to sleep, and give it up, just as they always do. These are the regions of the Known and of the Unknown. What is the use of going right over the old track again? There is an adder in the path which your own feet have worn. You must make

tracks into the Unknown. That is what you have your board and clothes for. Why do you ever mend your clothes, unless that, wearing them, you may mend your ways? Let us sing.

TO SOPHIA THOREAU (AT CAMPTON, N. H.).

CONCORD, July 8, 1860.

DEAR SOPHIA, — Mother reminds me that I must write to you, if only a few lines, though I have sprained my thumb, so that it is questionable whether I can write legibly, if at all. I can't "bear on" much. What is worse, I believe that I have sprained my brain too — that is, it sympathizes with my thumb. But that is no excuse, I suppose, for writing a letter in such a case is like sending a newspaper, only a hint to let you know that "all is well," — but my thumb.

I hope that you begin to derive some benefit from that more mountainous air which you are breathing. Have you had a distinct view of the Franconia Notch Mountains (blue peaks in the northern horizon)? which I told you you could get from the road in Campton, probably from some other points nearer. Such a view of the mountains is more memorable than any other. Have you been to Squam Lake or overlooked it? I should think that you could make an excursion to some mountain in that direction from which you could see the lake and mountains generally. Is there no friend of N. P. Rogers who can tell you where the "lions" are?

Of course I did not go to North Elba,¹ but I sent

¹ He was invited to a gathering of John Brown's friends at the

some reminiscences of last fall. I hear that John Brown, Jr., has now come to Boston for a few days. Mr. Sanborn's case, it is said, will come on after some murder cases have been disposed of here.

I have just been invited formally to be present at the annual picnic of Theodore Parker's society (that was), at Waverley, next Wednesday, and to make some remarks. But that is wholly out of my line. I do not go to picnics, even in Concord, you know.

Mother and Aunt Sophia rode to Acton in time yesterday. I suppose that you have heard that Mr. Hawthorne has come home. I went to meet him the other evening and found that he has not altered, except that he was looking quite brown after his voyage. He is as simple and childlike as ever.

I believe that I have fairly scared the kittens away, at last, by my pretended fierceness, which was. I will consider my thumb — and your eyes.

HENRY.

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, August 3, 1860.

MR. BLAKE, — I some time ago asked Channing if he would not spend a week with me on Monadnock; but he did not answer decidedly. Lately he has talked of an excursion somewhere, but I said that *now* I must wait till my sister returned from Plymouth, N. H.

grave in the Adirondack woods. "Mr. Sanborn's case" was an indictment and civil suit against Silas Carleton *et als.* for an attempt to kidnap F. B. Sanborn, who had refused to accept the invitation of the Senate at Washington to testify in the John Brown investigation.

She has returned, — and accordingly, on receiving your note this morning, I made known its contents to Channing, in order to see how far I was engaged with him. The result is that he decides to go to Monadnock to-morrow morning;¹ so I must defer making an excursion with you and Brown to another season. Perhaps you will call as you pass the mountain. I send this by the earliest mail.

P. S. — That was a very insufficient visit which you made here the last time. My mother is better, though far from well; and if you should chance along here any time after your journey, I trust that we shall all do better.

The mention by Thoreau of John Brown and my “case” recalls to me an incident of those excited days

¹ This is the excursion described by Thoreau in a subsequent letter, — lasting six days, and the first that Channing had made which involved “camping out.” It was also Thoreau’s last visit to this favorite mountain; but Channing continued to go there after the death of his friend; and some of these visits are recorded in his poem “The Wanderer.” The last one was in September, 1869, when I accompanied him, and we again spent five nights on the plateau where he had camped with Thoreau. At that time, one of the “two good spruce houses, half a mile apart,” mentioned by Thoreau, was still standing, in ruins, — the place called by Channing “Henry’s Camp,” and thus described: —

We built our fortress where you see
Yon group of spruce-trees, sidewise on the line
Where the horizon to the eastward bounds, —
A point selected by sagacious art,
Where all at once we viewed the Vermont hills,
And the long outline of the mountain-ridge,
Ever renewing, changeful every hour.

See *The Wanderer* (Boston, 1871), p. 61.

which followed the attack by Brown on slavery in Virginia. The day after Brown's death, but before the execution of his comrades, I received a message from the late Dr. David Thayer of Boston, implying, as I thought, that a son of Brown was at his house, whither I hurried to meet him. Instead, I found young F. J. Merriam of Boston, who had escaped with Owen Brown from Harper's Ferry, and was now in Boston to raise another party against the slaveholders. He was unfit to lead or even join in such a desperate undertaking, and we insisted he should return to safety in Canada, — a large reward being offered for his seizure. He agreed to go back to Canada that night by the Fitchburg Railroad; but in his hot-headed way he took the wrong train, which ran no farther than Concord, — and found himself in the early evening at my house, where my sister received him, but insisted that I should not see him, lest I might be questioned about my guest. While he had supper and went to bed, I posted down to Mr. Emerson's and engaged his horse and covered wagon, to be ready at sunrise, — he asking no questions. In the same way I engaged Mr. Thoreau to drive his friend's horse to South Acton the next morning, and there put on board the first Canadian train a Mr. Lockwood, whom he would find at my house. Thoreau readily consented, asked no questions, walked to the Emerson stable the next morning, found the horse ready, drove him to my door, and took up Merriam, under the name of Lockwood, — neither knowing who the other was. Merriam was so flighty that, though he had agreed to go to Montreal, and knew that his life

might depend on getting there early, he declared he must see Mr. Emerson, to lay before him his plan for invading the South, and consult him about some moral questions that troubled his mind. His companion listened gravely, — and hurried the horse towards Acton. Merriam grew more positive and suspicious, — “Perhaps *you* are Mr. Emerson; you look somewhat like him.”¹ “No, I am not,” said Thoreau, and drove steadily away from Concord. “Well, then, I am going back,” said the youth, and flung himself out of the wagon. How Thoreau got him in again, he never told me; but I suspected some judicious force, accompanying the grave persuasive speech natural to our friend. At any rate, he took his man to Acton, saw him safe on the train, and reported to me that “Mr. Lockwood had taken passage for Canada,” where he arrived that night. Nothing more passed between us until, more than two years after, he inquired one day, in his last illness, who my fugitive was. Merriam was then out of danger in that way, and had been for months a soldier in the Union army, where he died. I therefore said that “Lockwood” was the grandson of his mother’s old friend, Francis Jackson, and had escaped from Maryland. In return he gave me the odd incidents of their drive, and mentioned that he had spoken of the affair to his mother only since his illness. So reticent and practically useful could he be; as Channing says, “He made no useless professions, never asked one of those questions which destroy all relation; but he was

¹ See Thoreau’s *Journal*, Dec. 3, 1859. Merriam mentioned Thoreau’s name to him, but never guessed who his companion was.

on the spot at the time, he meant friendship, and meant nothing else, and stood by it without the slightest abatement."

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, November 4, 1860.

MR. BLAKE, — I am glad to hear any particulars of your excursion. As for myself, I looked out for you somewhat on that Monday, when, it appears, you passed Monadnock; turned my glass upon several parties that were ascending the mountain half a mile on one side of us. In short, I came as near to seeing you as you to seeing me. I have no doubt that we should have had a good time if you had come, for I had, all ready, two good spruce houses, in which you could stand up, complete in all respects, half a mile apart, and you and B. could have lodged by yourselves in one, if not with us.

We made an excellent beginning of our mountain life.¹ You may remember that the Saturday previous was a stormy day. Well, we went up in the rain, — wet through, — and found ourselves in a cloud there at mid-afternoon, in no situation to look about for the best place for a camp. So I proceeded at once, through the cloud, to that memorable stone, "chunk yard," in which we made our humble camp once, and there, after putting our packs under a rock, having a good hatchet, I proceeded to build a substantial house, which Channing declared the handsomest he ever saw. (He never

¹ This was Thoreau's last visit to Monadnock, and the one mentioned in the note of August 3, and in Channing's *Wanderer*.

camped out before, and was, no doubt, prejudiced in its favor.) This was done about dark, and by that time we were nearly as wet as if we had stood in a hogshead of water. We then built a fire before the door, directly on the site of our little camp of two years ago, and it took a long time to burn through its remains to the earth beneath. Standing before this, and turning round slowly, like meat that is roasting, we were as dry, if not drier, than ever, after a few hours, and so at last we "turned in."

This was a great deal better than going up there in fair weather, and having no adventure (not knowing how to appreciate either fair weather or foul) but dull, commonplace sleep in a useless house, and before a comparatively useless fire, — such as we get every night. Of course we thanked our stars, when we saw them, which was about midnight, that they had seemingly withdrawn for a season. We had the mountain all to ourselves that afternoon and night. There was nobody going up that day to engrave his name on the summit, nor to gather blueberries. The genius of the mountains saw us starting from Concord, and it said, There come two of our folks. Let us get ready for them. Get up a serious storm, that will send a-packing these holiday guests. (They may have their say another time.) Let us receive them with true mountain hospitality, — kill the fatted cloud. Let them know the value of a spruce roof, and of a fire of dead spruce stumps. Every bush dripped tears of joy at our advent. Fire did its best, and received our thanks. What could fire have done in fair weather? Spruce roof got its share of our

blessings. And then, such a view of the wet rocks, with the wet lichens on them, as we had the next morning, but did not get again!

We and the mountain had a sound season, as the saying is. How glad we were to be wet, in order that we might be dried! How glad we were of the storm which made our house seem like a new home to us! This day's experience was indeed lucky, for we did not have a thunder-shower during all our stay. Perhaps our host reserved this attention in order to tempt us to come again.

Our next house was more substantial still. One side was rock, good for durability; the floor the same; and the roof which I made would have upheld a horse. I stood on it to do the shingling.

I noticed, when I was at the White Mountains last, several nuisances which render traveling thereabouts unpleasant. The chief of these was the mountain houses. I might have supposed that the main attraction of that region, even to citizens, lay in its wildness and unlikeness to the city, and yet they make it as much like the city as they can afford to. I heard that the Crawford House was lighted with gas, and had a large saloon, with its band of music, for dancing. But give me a spruce house made in the rain.

An old Concord farmer tells me that he ascended Monadnock once, and danced on the top. How did that happen? Why, he being up there, a party of young men and women came up, bringing boards and a fiddler; and, having laid down the boards, they made a level floor, on which they danced to the music of the

fiddle. I suppose the tune was "Excelsior." This reminds me of the fellow who climbed to the top of a very high spire, stood upright on the ball, and hurrahed for — what? Why, for Harrison and Tyler. That's the kind of sound which most ambitious people emit when they culminate. They are wont to be singularly frivolous in the thin atmosphere; they can't contain themselves, though our comfort and their safety require it; it takes the pressure of many atmospheres to do this; and hence they helplessly evaporate there. It would seem that as they ascend, they breathe shorter and shorter, and, at each *expiration*, some of their wits leave them, till, when they reach the pinnacle, they are so light-headed as to be fit only to show how the wind sits. I suspect that Emerson's criticism called "Monadnoc" was inspired, not by remembering the inhabitants of New Hampshire as they are in the valleys, so much as by meeting some of them on the mountain-top.

After several nights' experience, Channing came to the conclusion that he was "lying outdoors," and inquired what was the largest beast that might nibble his legs there. I fear that he did not improve all the night, as he might have done, to sleep. I had asked him to go and spend a week there. We spent five nights, being gone six days, for C. suggested that six working days made a week, and I saw that he was ready to *decamp*. However, he found his account in it as well as I.

We were seen to go up in the rain, grim and silent, like two genii of the storm, by Fassett's men or boys; but we were never identified afterward, though we

were the subject of some conversation which we overheard. Five hundred persons at least came on to the mountain while we were there, but not one found our camp. We saw one party of three ladies and two gentlemen spread their blankets and spend the night on the top, and heard them converse; but they did not know that they had neighbors who were comparatively old settlers. We spared them the chagrin which that knowledge would have caused them, and let them print their story in a newspaper accordingly.

Yes, to meet men on an honest and simple footing, meet with rebuffs, suffer from sore feet, as you did, — ay, and from a sore heart, as perhaps you also did, — all that is excellent. What a pity that that young prince¹ could not enjoy a little of the legitimate experience of traveling — be dealt with simply and truly, though rudely. He might have been invited to some hospitable house in the country, had his bowl of bread and milk set before him, with a clean pinafore; been told that there were the punt and the fishing-rod, and he could amuse himself as he chose; might have swung a few birches, dug out a woodchuck, and had a regular good time, and finally been sent to bed with the boys, — and so never have been introduced to Mr. Everett at all. I have no doubt that this would have been a far more memorable and valuable experience than he got.

The snow-clad summit of Mt. Washington must have been a very interesting sight from Wachusett. How wholesome winter is, seen far or near; how good,

¹ The Prince of Wales (now King Edward VII), then visiting America with the Duke of Newcastle.

above all mere sentimental, warm-blooded, short-lived, soft-hearted, *moral* goodness, commonly so called. Give me the goodness which has forgotten its own deeds, — which God has seen to be good, and let be. None of your *just made perfect*, — pickled eels! All that will save them will be their picturesqueness, as with blasted trees. Whatever is, and is not ashamed to be, is good. I value no moral goodness or greatness unless it is good or great, even as that snowy peak is. Pray, how could thirty feet of bowels improve it? Nature is goodness crystallized. You looked into the land of promise. Whatever beauty we behold, the more it is distant, serene, and cold, the purer and more durable it is. It is better to warm ourselves with ice than with fire.

Tell Brown that he sent me more than the price of the book, viz., a word from himself, for which I am greatly his debtor.

Thoreau began to be more seriously ill than he had been for some years, early in December, 1860. He exposed himself unduly in one of his walks, while counting the rings on stumps of trees, amid snow. He ceased much of his small activity of letter-writing; but, in addressing Ricketson the next spring, he took the unusual pains of writing him a letter of some length which he never sent. It was found among his papers after death, — the first draft of it, which ran as follows, but was left a fragment: —

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 19, 1861.

FRIEND R, — Your letter reached me in due time, but I had already heard the bluebirds. They were here on the 26th of February at least, — but not yet do the larks sing or the flickers call, with us. The bluebirds come again, as does the same spring, but it does not find the same mortals here to greet it. You remember Minott's cottage on the hillside, — well, it finds some change there, for instance. The little gray hip-roofed cottage was occupied at the beginning of February, this year, by George Minott and his sister Mary, respectively 78 and 80 years old, and Miss Potter, 74. These had been its permanent occupants for many years. Minott had been on his last legs for some time, — at last off his legs, expecting weekly to take his departure, — a burden to himself and friends, — yet dry and natural as ever. His sister took care of him, and supported herself and family with her needle, as usual. He lately willed his little property to her, as a slight compensation for her care. Feb. 13 their sister, 86 or 87, who lived across the way, died. Miss Minott had taken cold in visiting her, and was so sick that she could not go to her funeral. She herself died of lung fever¹ on the 18th (which was said to be the same disease that her sister had), — having just willed her property back to George, and added her own mite to it. Miss Potter, too, had now become ill, — too ill to attend the funeral, — and she died of the same disease on the 23d. All

¹ Now termed pneumonia.

departed as gently as the sun goes down, leaving George alone.

I called to see him the other day, — the 27th of February, a remarkably pleasant spring day, — and as I was climbing the sunny slope to his strangely deserted house, I heard the first bluebirds upon the elm that hangs over it. They had come as usual, though some who used to hear them were gone. Even Minott had not heard them, though the door was open, — for he was thinking of other things. Perhaps there will be a time when the bluebirds themselves will not return any more.

I hear that George, a few days after this, called out to his niece, who had come to take care of him, and was in the next room, to know if she did not feel lonely? “Yes, I do,” said she. “So do I,” added he. He said he was like an old oak, all shattered and decaying. “I am sure, Uncle,” said his niece, “you are not much like an oak!” “I mean,” said he, “that I am like an oak or any other tree, inasmuch as I cannot stir from where I am.”

Either this topic was too pathetic for Thoreau to finish the letter, or perchance he thought it not likely to interest his friend; for he threw aside this draft for three days, and then, with the same beginning, wrote a very different letter. The Minotts were old familiar acquaintance, and related to that Captain Minott whom Thoreau’s grandmother married as a second husband. George was his “old man of Verona,” who had not left Concord for more than forty years, except to stray

over the town bounds in hunting or wood-ranging; and Mary was the "tailoress" who for years made Thoreau's garments.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, March 22, 1861.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — The bluebird was here the 26th of February, at least, which is one day earlier than you date; but I have not heard of larks nor pigeon woodpeckers. To tell the truth, I am not on the alert for the signs of spring, not having had any winter yet. I took a severe cold about the 3d of December, which at length resulted in a kind of bronchitis, so that I have been confined to the house ever since, excepting a very few experimental trips as far as the post-office in some particularly fine noons. My health otherwise has not been affected in the least, nor my spirits. I have simply been imprisoned for so long, and it has not prevented my doing a good deal of reading and the like.

Channing has looked after me very faithfully; says he has made a study of my case, and knows me better than I know myself, etc., etc. Of course, if I knew how it began, I should know better how it would end. I trust that when warm weather comes I shall begin to pick up my crumbs. I thank you for your invitation to come to New Bedford, and will bear it in mind; but at present my health will not permit my leaving home.

The day I received your letter, Blake and Brown arrived here, having walked from Worcester in two days, though Alcott, who happened in soon after, could not understand what pleasure they found in walking

across the country in this season, when the ways were so unsettled. I had a solid talk with them for a day and a half — though my pipes were not in good order — and they went their way again.

You may be interested to hear that Alcott is at present, perhaps, the most successful man in the town. He had his second annual exhibition of all the schools in the town, at the Town Hall last Saturday; at which all the masters and misses did themselves great credit, as I hear, and of course reflected some on their teachers and parents. They were making their little speeches from one till six o'clock P. M., to a large audience, which patiently listened to the end. In the meanwhile, the children made Mr. Alcott an unexpected present of a fine edition of "Pilgrim's Progress" and Herbert's Poems, which, of course, overcame all parties. I inclose an order of exercises.¹

We had, last night, an old-fashioned northeast snow-storm, far worse than anything in the winter; and the drifts are now very high above the fences. The inhabitants are pretty much confined to their houses, as I was already. All houses are one color, white, with the snow

¹ In April, 1859, Mr. Alcott was chosen superintendent of the public schools of Concord, by a school committee of which Mr. Bull, the creator of the Concord grape, and Mr. Sanborn, were members, and for some years he directed the studies of the younger pupils, to their great benefit and delight. At the yearly "exhibitions," songs were sung composed by Louisa Alcott and others, and the whole town assembled to see and hear. The stress of civil war gradually checked this idyllic movement, and Mr. Alcott returned to his garden and library. It was two years after this that Miss Alcott had her severe experience as hospital nurse at Washington.

plastered over them, and you cannot tell whether they have blinds or not. Our pump has another pump, its ghost, as thick as itself, sticking to one side of it. The town has sent out teams of eight oxen each, to break out the roads; and the train due from Boston at 8½ A. M. has not arrived yet (4 P. M.). All the passing has been a train from above at 12 M., which also was due at 8½ A. M. Where are the bluebirds now, think you? I suppose that you have not so much snow at New Bedford, if any.

TO PARKER PILLSBURY (AT CONCORD, N. H.).

CONCORD, April 10, 1861.

FRIEND PILLSBURY, — I am sorry to say that I have not a copy of “Walden” which I can spare; and know of none, unless possibly Ticknor & Fields may have one. I send, nevertheless, a copy of “The Week,” the price of which is one dollar and twenty-five cents, which you can pay at your convenience.

As for your friend, my prospective reader, I hope he ignores Fort Sumter, and “Old Abe,” and all that; for that is just the most fatal, and, indeed, the only fatal weapon you can direct against evil, ever; for, as long as you *know of it*, you are *particeps criminis*. What business have you, if you are an “angel of light,” to be pondering over the deeds of darkness, reading the *New York Herald*, and the like?

I do not so much regret the present condition of things in this country (provided I regret it at all), as I do that I ever heard of it. I know one or two, who have this year, for the first time, read a President’s

Message; but they do not see that this implies a *fall* in themselves, rather than a *rise* in the President. Blessed were the days before you read a President's Message. Blessed are the young, for they do not read the President's Message. Blessed are they who never read a newspaper, for they shall see Nature, and, through her, God.

But, alas! *I* have heard of Sumter and Pickens, and even of Buchanan (though I did not read his Message). I also read the *New York Tribune*; but then, I am reading Herodotus and Strabo, and Blodget's "Climatology," and "Six Years in the Desert of North America," as hard as I can, to counterbalance it.

By the way, Alcott is at present our most popular and successful man, and has just published a volume in size, in the shape of the Annual School Report, which I presume he has sent to you.

Yours, for remembering all good things,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Parker Pillsbury, to whom this letter went, was an old friend of the Thoreau family, with whom he became intimate in the antislavery agitation, wherein they took part, while he was a famous orator, celebrated by Emerson in one of his essays. Mr. Pillsbury visited Thoreau in his last illness, when he could scarcely speak above a whisper, and, having made to him some remark concerning the future life, Thoreau replied, "My friend, one world at a time." His petulant words in this letter concerning national affairs would hardly have been said a few days later, when,

at the call of Abraham Lincoln, the people rose to protect their government, and every President's Message became of thrilling interest, even to Thoreau.

Arrangements were now making for the invalid, about whose health his friends had been anxious for some years, to travel for a better climate than the New England spring affords, and early in May Thoreau set out for the upper Mississippi. He thus missed the last letter sent to him by his English friend Cholmondeley, which I answered, then forwarded to him at Redwing, in Minnesota. It is of interest enough to be given here.

T. CHOLMONDELEY TO THOREAU (IN MINNESOTA).

SHREWSBURY [England], April 23, 1861.

MY DEAR THOREAU, — It is now some time since I wrote to you or heard from you, but do not suppose that I have forgotten you, or shall ever cease to cherish in my mind those days at dear old Concord. The last I heard about you all was from Morton,¹ who was in England about a year ago; and I hope that he has got over his difficulties and is now in his own country again. I think he has seen rather more of English country life than most Yankee tourists; and appeared to find it *curious*, though I fear he was dulled by our ways; for he was too full of ceremony and compliments and bows, which is a mistake here; though very well in Spain. I am afraid he was rather on pins and needles; but he made a splendid speech at a volunteer

¹ Edwin Morton of Plymouth, Mass., a friend of John Brown and Gerrit Smith, who went to England in October, 1859, to avoid testifying against his friends.

supper, and indeed the *very best*, some said, ever heard in this part of the country.

We are here in a state of alarm and apprehension, the world being so troubled in East and West and everywhere. Last year the harvest was bad and scanty. This year our trade is beginning to feel the events in America. In reply to the northern tariff, of course we are going to smuggle as much as we can. The supply of cotton being such a necessity to us, we must work up India and South Africa a little better. There is war even in old New Zealand, but not in the same island where my people are ! Besides, we are certainly on the eve of a continental blaze, *so we are making merry and living while we can* ; not being sure where we shall be this time a year.

Give my affectionate regards to your father, mother, and sister, and to Mr. Emerson and his family, and to Channing, Sanborn, Ricketson, Blake, and Morton and Alcott and Parker. A thought arises in my mind whether I may not be enumerating some dead men ! Perhaps Parker is !

These rumors of wars make me wish that we had got done with this brutal stupidity of war altogether ; and I believe, Thoreau, that the human race will at last get rid of it, though perhaps not in a creditable way ; but such *powers* will be brought to bear that it will become monstrous even to the French. Dundonald declared to the last that he possessed secrets which from their tremendous character would make war impossible. So peace may be begotten from the machinations of evil.

Have you heard of any good books lately? I think "Burnt Njal" good, and believe it to be genuine. "Hast thou not heard" (says Steinrora to Thangbrand) "how Thor challenged Christ to single combat, and how he did not dare to fight with Thor?" When Gunnar brandishes his sword, three swords are seen in air. The account of Ospah and Brodir and Brian's battle is the only historical account of that engagement, which the Irish talk so much of; for I place little trust in O'Halloran's authority, though the outline is the same in both.

Darwin's "Origin of Species" may be fanciful, but it is a move in the right direction. Emerson's "Conduct of Life" has done me good; but it will not go down in England for a generation or so. But *these* are some of them already a year or two old. The book of the season is Du Chaillu's "Central Africa," with accounts of the Gorilla, of which you are aware that you have had a skeleton at Boston for many years. There is also one in the British Museum; but they have now several stuffed specimens at the Geographical Society's rooms in Town. I suppose you will have seen Sir Emerson Tennent's "Ceylon," which is perhaps as complete a book as ever was published; and a better monument to a governor's residence in a great province was never made.

We have been lately astonished by a foreign Hamlet, a supposed impossibility; but Mr. Fechter does real wonders. No doubt he will visit America, and then you may see the best actor in the world. He has carried out Goethe's idea of Hamlet as given in the "Wil-

helm Meister," showing him forth as a fair-haired and fat man. I suppose you are not got fat yet?

Yours ever truly,

THOS. CHOLMONDELEY.¹

TO HARRISON BLAKE (AT WORCESTER).

CONCORD, May 3, 1861.

MR. BLAKE, — I am still as much an invalid as when you and Brown were here, if not more of one, and at this rate there is danger that the cold weather may come again, before I get over my bronchitis. The doctor accordingly tells me that I must "clear out" to the West Indies, or elsewhere, — he does not seem to care much where. But I decide against the West Indies, on

¹ A word may be said of the after life of this magnanimous Englishman, who did not long survive his Concord correspondent. In March, 1863, being then in command of a battalion of Shropshire Volunteers, which he had raised, he inherited Condover Hall and the large estate adjacent, and took the name of Owen as a condition of the inheritance. A year later he married Miss Victoria Cotes, daughter of John and Lady Louisa Cotes (Co. Salop), a godchild of the Queen, and went to Italy for his wedding tour. In Florence he was seized with a malignant fever, April 10, 1864, and died there April 20, — not quite two years after Thoreau's death. His brother Reginald, who had met him in Florence, carried back his remains to England, and he is buried in Condover churchyard. Writing to an American friend, Mr. R. Cholmondeley said: "The whole county mourned for one who had made himself greatly beloved. During his illness his thoughts went back very much to America and her great sufferings. His large heart felt for your country as if it were his own." It seems that he did not go to New Zealand with the "Canterbury Pilgrims," as suggested in the *Atlantic Monthly* (December, 1893), but in the first of Lord Lyttelton's ships (the *Charlotte Jane*), having joined in Lord L.'s scheme for colonizing the island, where he remained only six months, near Christchurch.

account of their muggy heat in the summer, and the South of Europe, on account of the expense of time and money, and have at last concluded that it will be most expedient for me to try the air of Minnesota, say somewhere about St. Paul's. I am only waiting to be well enough to start. Hope to get off within a week or ten days.

The inland air may help me at once, or it may not. At any rate, I am so much of an invalid that I shall have to study my comfort in traveling to a remarkable degree, — stopping to rest, etc., etc., if need be. I think to get a through ticket to Chicago, with liberty to stop frequently on the way, making my first stop of consequence at Niagara Falls, several days or a week, at a private boarding-house; then a night or day at Detroit; and as much at Chicago as my health may require. At Chicago I can decide at what point (Fulton, Dunleith, or another) to strike the Mississippi, and take a boat to St. Paul's.

I trust to find a private boarding-house in one or various agreeable places in that region, and spend my time there. I expect, and shall be prepared, to be gone three months; and I would like to return by a different route, — perhaps Mackinaw and Montreal.

I have thought of finding a companion, of course, yet not seriously, because I had no right to offer myself as a companion to anybody, having such a peculiarly private and all-absorbing but miserable business as *my* health, and not altogether *his*, to attend to, causing me to stop here and go there, etc., etc., unaccountably.

Nevertheless, I have just now decided to let you know of my intention, thinking it barely possible that you might like to make a part or the whole of this journey at the same time, and that perhaps your own health may be such as to be benefited by it.

Pray let me know if such a statement offers any temptations to you. I write in great haste for the mail, and must omit all the moral.

TO F. B. SANBORN (AT CONCORD).

REDWING, MINNESOTA, June 26, 1861.

MR. SANBORN, — I was very glad to find awaiting me, on my arrival here on Sunday afternoon, a letter from you. I have performed this journey in a very dead and alive manner, but nothing has come so near waking me up as the receipt of letters from Concord. I read yours, and one from my sister (and Horace Mann, his four), near the top of a remarkable isolated bluff here, called Barn Bluff, or the Grange, or Redwing Bluff, some four hundred and fifty feet high, and half a mile long, — a bit of the main bluff or bank standing alone. The top, as you know, rises to the general level of the surrounding country, the river having eaten out so much. Yet the valley just above and below this (we are at the head of Lake Pepin) must be three or four miles wide.

I am not even so well informed as to the progress of the war as you suppose. I have seen but one Eastern paper (that, by the way, *was* the *Tribune*) for five weeks. I have not taken much pains to get them; but, necessarily, I have not seen any paper at all for more

than a week at a time. The people of Minnesota have *seemed* to me more cold, — to feel less implicated in this war than the people of Massachusetts. It is apparent that Massachusetts, for one State at least, is doing much more than her share in carrying it on. However, I have dealt partly with those of Southern birth, and have seen but little way beneath the surface. I was glad to be told yesterday that there was a good deal of weeping here at Redwing the other day, when the volunteers stationed at Fort Snelling followed the regulars to the seat of the war. They do not weep when their children go *up* the river to occupy the deserted forts, though they *may* have to fight the Indians there.

I do not even know what the attitude of England is at present.

The grand feature hereabouts is, of course, the Mississippi River. Too much can hardly be said of its grandeur, and of the beauty of this portion of it (from Dunleith, and probably from Rock Island to this place). St. Paul is a dozen miles below the Falls of St. Anthony, or near the head of uninterrupted navigation on the main stream, about two thousand miles from its mouth. There is not a “rip” below that, and the river is almost as wide in the upper as the lower part of its course. Steamers go up the Sauk Rapids, above the Falls, near a hundred miles farther, and then you are fairly in the pine woods and lumbering country. Thus it flows from the pine to the palm.

The lumber, as you know, is sawed chiefly at the Falls of St. Anthony (what is not rafted in the log to

ports far below), having given rise to the towns of St. Anthony, Minneapolis, etc., etc. In coming up the river from Dunleith, you meet with great rafts of sawed lumber and of logs, twenty rods or more in length, by five or six wide, floating down, all from the pine region above the Falls. An old Maine lumberer, who has followed the same business here, tells me that the sources of the Mississippi were comparatively free from rocks and rapids, making easy work for them; but he thought that the timber was more knotty here than in Maine.

It has chanced that about half the men whom I have spoken with in Minnesota, whether travelers or settlers, were from Massachusetts.

After spending some three weeks in and about St. Paul, St. Anthony, and Minneapolis, we made an excursion in a steamer, some three hundred or more miles up the Minnesota (St. Peter's) River, to Redwood, or the Lower Sioux Agency, in order to see the plains, and the Sioux, who were to receive their annual payment there. This is eminently *the* river of Minnesota (for she shares the Mississippi with Wisconsin), and it is of incalculable value to her. It flows through a very fertile country destined to be famous for its wheat; but it is a remarkably winding stream, so that Redwood is only half as far from its mouth by land as by water. There was not a straight reach a mile in length as far as we went, — generally you could not see a quarter of a mile of water, and the boat was steadily turning this way or that. At the greater bends, as the Traverse des Sioux, some of the passengers were landed, and walked across to be taken in on the other side. Two or three times

you could have thrown a stone across the neck of the isthmus, while it was from one to three miles around it. It was a very novel kind of navigation to me. The boat was perhaps the largest that had been up so high, and the water was rather low (it had been about fifteen feet higher). In making a short turn, we repeatedly and designedly ran square into the steep and soft bank, taking in a cart-load of earth, — this being more effectual than the rudder to fetch us about again; or the deeper water was so narrow and close to the shore, that we were obliged to run into and break down at least fifty trees which overhung the water, when we did not cut them off, repeatedly losing a part of our outworks, though the most exposed had been taken in. I could pluck almost any plant on the bank from the boat. We very frequently got aground, and then drew ourselves along with a windlass and a cable fastened to a tree, or we swung round in the current, and completely blocked up and blockaded the river, one end of the boat resting on each shore. And yet we would haul ourselves round again with the windlass and cable in an hour or two, though the boat was about one hundred and sixty feet long, and drew some three feet of water, or, often, water and sand. It was one consolation to know that in such a case we were all the while damming the river, and so raising it. We once ran fairly on to a concealed rock, with a shock that aroused all the passengers, and rested there, and the mate went below with a lamp, expecting to find a hole, but he did not. Snags and sawyers were so common that I forgot to mention them. The sound of the boat rum-

bling over one was the ordinary music. However, as long as the boiler did not burst, we knew that no serious accident was likely to happen. Yet this was a singularly navigable river, more so than the Mississippi above the Falls, and it is owing to its very crookedness. Ditch it straight, and it would not only be very swift, but soon run out. It was from ten to fifteen rods wide near the mouth, and from eight to ten or twelve at Redwood. Though the current was swift, I did not see a "rip" on it, and only three or four rocks. For three months in the year I am told that it can be navigated by small steamers about twice as far as we went, or to its source in Big Stone Lake; and a former Indian agent told me that at high water it was thought that such a steamer might pass into the Red River.

In short, this river proved so very *long* and navigable, that I was reminded of the last letter or two in the voyage of the Baron la Hontan (written near the end of the seventeenth century, I *think*), in which he states, that, after reaching the Mississippi (by the Illinois or Wisconsin), the limit of previous exploration westward, he voyaged up it with his Indians, and at length turned up a great river coming in from the west, which he called "La Rivière Longue;" and he relates various improbable things about the country and its inhabitants, so that this letter has been regarded as pure fiction, or, more properly speaking, a lie. But I am somewhat inclined now to reconsider the matter.

The Governor of Minnesota (Ramsay), the superintendent of Indian affairs in this quarter, and the newly appointed Indian agent were on board; also a German

band from St. Paul, a small cannon for salutes, and the money for the Indians (ay, and the gamblers, it was said, who were to bring it back in another boat). There were about one hundred passengers, chiefly from St. Paul, and more or less recently from the northeastern States; also half a dozen young educated Englishmen. Chancing to speak with one who sat next to me, when the voyage was nearly half over, I found that he was the son of the Rev. Samuel May,¹ and a classmate of yours, and had been looking for us at St. Anthony.

The last of the little settlements on the river was New Ulm, about one hundred miles this side of Redwood. It consists wholly of Germans. We left them one hundred barrels of salt, which will be worth something more when the water is lowest than at present.

Redwood is a mere locality, — scarcely an Indian village, — where there is a store, and some houses have been built for them. We were now fairly on the great plains, and looking south; and, after walking that way three miles, could see no tree in that horizon. The buffalo were said to be feeding within twenty-five or thirty miles.

A regular council was held with the Indians, who had come in on their ponies, and speeches were made on both sides through an interpreter, quite in the described mode, — the Indians, as usual, having the advantage in point of truth and earnestness, and therefore of eloquence. The most prominent chief was named Little Crow. They were quite dissatisfied with the white man's treatment of them, and probably have reason to

¹ Rev. Joseph May, a cousin of Louisa Alcott.

be so. This council was to be continued for two or three days, — the payment to be made the second day; and another payment to other bands a little higher up, on the Yellow Medicine (a tributary of the Minnesota), a few days thereafter.

In the afternoon, the half-naked Indians performed a dance, at the request of the Governor, for our amusement and their own benefit; and then we took leave of them, and of the officials who had come to treat with them.

Excuse these pencil marks, but my inkstand is *unscrewable*, and I can only direct my letter at the bar. I could tell you more, and perhaps more interesting things, if I had time. I am considerably better than when I left home, but still far from well.

Our faces are already set toward home. Will you please let my sister know that we shall *probably* start for Milwaukee and Mackinaw in a day or two (or as soon as we hear from home) *via* Prairie du Chien, and not La Crosse.

I am glad to hear that you have written Cholmondeley,¹ as it relieves me of some *responsibility*.

The tour described in this long letter was the first and last that Thoreau ever made west of the Mohawk Valley, though his friend Channing had early visited the great prairies, and lived in log cabins of Illinois, or sailed on the chain of great lakes, by which Thoreau made a part of this journey. It was proposed that

¹ I had answered T. Cholmondeley's last letter, explaining that Thoreau was ill and absent.

Channing should accompany him this time, as he had in the tour through Lower Canada, and along Cape Cod, as well as in the journeys through the Berkshire and Catskill mountains, and down the Hudson; but some misunderstanding or temporary inconvenience prevented. The actual comrade was young Horace Mann, eldest son of the school-reformer and statesman of that name, — a silent, earnest, devoted naturalist, who died early. The place where his party met the Indians — only a few months before the Minnesota massacre of 1862 — was in the county of Redwood, in the southwest of the State, where now is a thriving village of 1500 people, and no buffaloes within five hundred miles. Red Wing, whence the letter was written, is below St. Paul, on the Mississippi, and was even then a considerable town, — now a city of 7000 people. The Civil War had lately begun, and the whole North was in the first flush of its uprising in defense of the Union, — for which Thoreau, in spite of his earlier defiance of government (for its alliance with slavery), was as zealous as any soldier. He returned in July, little benefited by the journey, of which he did not take his usual sufficiency of notes, and to which there is little allusion in his books. Nor does it seem that he visited on the way his correspondent since January, 1856, — C. H. Greene, of Rochester, Michigan, who had never seen him in Concord. The opinion of Thoreau himself concerning this journey will be found in his next letter to Daniel Ricketson.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, August 15, 1861.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — When your last letter was written I was away in the far Northwest, in search of health. My cold turned to bronchitis, which made me a close prisoner almost up to the moment of my starting on that journey, early in May. As I had an incessant cough, my doctor told me that I must “clear out,” — to the West Indies, or elsewhere, — so I selected Minnesota. I returned a few weeks ago, after a good deal of steady traveling, considerably, yet not essentially, better; my cough still continuing. If I don’t mend very quickly, I shall be obliged to go to another climate again very soon.

My ordinary pursuits, both indoors and out, have been for the most part omitted, or seriously interrupted, — walking, boating, scribbling, etc. Indeed, I have been sick so long that I have almost forgotten what it is to be well; and yet I feel that it is in all respects only my envelope. Channing and Emerson are as well as usual; but Alcott, I am sorry to say, has for some time been more or less confined by a lameness, perhaps of a neuralgic character, occasioned by carrying too great a weight on his back while gardening.

On returning home, I found various letters awaiting me; among others, one from Cholmondeley, and one from yourself.

Of course I am sufficiently surprised to hear of your conversion;¹ yet I scarcely know what to say about it,

¹ A return to religious Quakerism, of which his friend had written enthusiastically.

unless that, judging by your account, it appears to me a change which concerns yourself peculiarly, and will not make you more valuable to mankind. However, perhaps I must see you before I can judge.

Remembering your numerous invitations, I write this short note now, chiefly to say that, if you are to be at home, and it will be quite agreeable to you, I will pay you a visit next week, and take such rides or sauntering walks with you as an invalid may.

The visit was made, and we owe to it the preservation of the latest portraiture of Thoreau, who, at his friend's urgency, sat to a photographer in New Bedford; and thus we have the full-bearded likeness of August, 1861; from which, also, and from personal recollection, Mr. Walton Ricketson made the fine profile medallion reproduced in photogravure for this volume.

TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, October 14, 1861.

FRIEND RICKETSON, — I think that, on the whole, my health is better than when you were here; but my faith in the doctors has not increased. I thank you all for your invitation to come to New Bedford, but I suspect that it must still be warmer here than there; that, indeed, New Bedford is warmer than Concord only in the winter, and so I abide by Concord.

September was pleasanter and much better for me than August, and October has thus far been quite tolerable. Instead of riding on horseback, I ride in a

wagon about every other day. My neighbor, Mr. E. R. Hoar, has two horses, and he, being away for the most part this fall, has generously offered me the use of one of them; and, as I notice, the dog throws himself in, and does scouting duty.

I am glad to hear that you no longer chew, but eschew, sugar-plums. One of the worst effects of sickness is, that it may get one into the *habit* of taking a little something — his bitters, or sweets, as if for his bodily good — from time to time, when he does not need it. However, there is no danger of this if you do not dose even when you are sick.

I went with a Mr. Rodman, a young man of your town, here the other day, or week, looking at farms for sale, and rumor says that he is inclined to buy a particular one. Channing says that he received his book, but has not got any of yours.

It is easy to talk, but hard to write.

From the worst of all correspondents,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

No later letter than this was written by Thoreau's own hand; for he was occupied all the winter of 1861–62, when he could write, in preparing his manuscripts for the press. Nothing appeared before his death, but in June, 1862, Mr. Fields, then editing the *Atlantic*, printed "Walking," — the first of three essays which came out in that magazine the same year. Nothing of Thoreau's had been accepted for the *Atlantic* since 1858, when he withdrew the rest of "Chesuncook," then coming out in its pages, because the editor (Mr. Lowell) had

made alterations in the manuscript. In April, just before his death, the *Atlantic* printed a short and characteristic sketch of Thoreau by Bronson Alcott, and in August, Emerson's funeral oration, given in the parish church of Concord. During the last six months of his illness, his sister and his friends wrote letters for him, as will be seen by the two that follow.

SOPHIA THOREAU TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, December 19, 1861.

MR. RICKETSON:

Dear Sir, — Thank you for your friendly interest in my dear brother. I wish that I could report more favorably in regard to his health. Soon after your visit to Concord, Henry commenced riding, and almost every day he introduced me to some of his familiar haunts, far away in the thick woods, or by the ponds; all very new and delightful to me. The air and exercise which he enjoyed during the fine autumn days were a benefit to him; he seemed stronger, had a good appetite, and was able to attend somewhat to his writing; but since the cold weather has come, his cough has increased, and he is able to go out but seldom. Just now he is suffering from an attack of pleurisy, which confines him wholly to the house. His spirits do not fail him; he continues in his usual serene mood, which is very pleasant for his friends as well as himself. I am hoping for a short winter and early spring, that the invalid may again be out of doors.

I am sorry to hear of your indisposition, and trust

that you will be well again soon. It would give me pleasure to see some of your newspaper articles, since you possess a hopeful spirit. My patience is nearly exhausted. The times look *very* dark. I think the next soldier who is shot for sleeping on his post should be Gen. McClellan. Why does he not do something in the way of fighting? I despair of ever living under the reign of Sumner or Phillips.

BRONSON ALCOTT TO DANIEL RICKETSON (AT NEW BEDFORD).

CONCORD, January 10, 1862.

DEAR FRIEND, — You have not been informed of Henry's condition this winter, and will be sorry to hear that he grows feebler day by day, and is evidently failing and fading from our sight. He gets some sleep, has a pretty good appetite, reads at intervals, takes notes of his readings, and likes to see his friends, conversing, however, with difficulty, as his voice partakes of his general debility. We had thought this oldest inhabitant of our Planet would have chosen to stay and see it fairly dismissed into the Chaos (out of which he has brought such precious jewels, — gifts to friends, to mankind generally, diadems for fame to coming followers, forgetful of his own claims to the honors) before he chose simply to withdraw from the spaces and times he has adorned with the truth of his genius. But the masterly work is nearly done for us here. And our woods and fields are sorrowing, though not in sombre, but in robes of white, so becoming to the piety and probity they have known so long, and soon are to miss.

There has been none such since Pliny, and it will be long before there comes his like; the most sagacious and wonderful Worthy of his time, and a marvel to coming ones.

I write at the suggestion of his sister, who thought his friends would like to be informed of his condition to the latest date.

Ever yours and respectfully,

A. BRONSON ALCOTT.

The last letter of Henry Thoreau, written by the hand of his sister, was sent to Myron Benton, a young literary man then living in Dutchess County, New York, who had written a grateful letter to the author of "Walden" (January 6, 1862), though quite unacquainted with him. Mr. Benton said that the news of Thoreau's illness had affected him as if it were that "of a personal friend whom I had known a long time," and added: "The secret of the influence by which your writings charm me is altogether as intangible, though real, as the attraction of Nature herself. I read and reread your books with ever fresh delight. Nor is it pleasure alone; there is a singular spiritual healthiness with which they seem imbued, — the expression of a soul essentially sound, so free from any morbid tendency." After mentioning that his own home was in a pleasant valley, once the hunting-ground of the Indians, Mr. Benton said: —

"I was in hope to read something more from your pen in Mr. Conway's *Dial*,¹ but only recognized that

¹ This was a short-lived monthly, edited at Cincinnati (1861-62)

fine pair of Walden twinlets. Of your two books, I perhaps prefer the 'Week' — but after all, 'Walden' is but little less a favorite. In the former, I like especially those little snatches of poetry interspersed throughout. I would like to ask what progress you have made in a work some way connected with natural history, — I think it was on Botany, — which Mr. Emerson told me something about in a short interview I had with him two years ago at Poughkeepsie. . . . If you should feel perfectly able at any time to drop me a few lines, I would like much to know what your state of health is, and if there is, as I cannot but hope, a prospect of your speedy recovery."

Two months and more passed before Thoreau replied; but his habit of performing every duty, whether of business or courtesy, would not excuse him from an answer, which was this:—

TO MYRON B. BENTON (AT LEEDSVILLE, N. Y.).

CONCORD, March 21, 1862.

DEAR SIR, — I thank you for your very kind letter, which, ever since I received it, I have intended to answer before I died, however briefly. I am encouraged to know, that, so far as you are concerned, I have not written my books in vain. I was particularly gratified, some years ago, when one of my friends and neighbors said, "I wish you would write another book, — write

by Moncure D. Conway, since distinguished as an author, who had resided for a time in Concord, after leaving his native Virginia. He wrote asking Thoreau and all his Concord friends to contribute to this new *Dial*, and several of them did so.

it for me." He is actually more familiar with what I have written than I am myself.

The verses you refer to in Conway's *Dial* were written by F. B. Sanborn of this town. I never wrote for that journal.

I am pleased when you say that in the "Week" you like especially "those little snatches of poetry interspersed through the book," for these, I suppose, are the least attractive to most readers. I have not been engaged in any particular work on Botany, or the like, though, if I were to live, I should have much to report on Natural History generally.

You ask particularly after my health. I *suppose* that I have not many months to live; but, of course, I know nothing about it. I may add that I am enjoying existence as much as ever, and regret nothing.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU,
by SOPHIA E. THOREAU.

He died May 6, 1862; his mother died March 12, 1872, and his sister Sophia, October, 1876. With the death of his aunt, Maria Thoreau, nearly twenty years after her beloved nephew, the last person of the name in America (or perhaps in England) passed away.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE letters of Thoreau, early or late, which did not reach me in time to be used in the original edition of this book, and have since appeared in print here and there, are included either in order of their date in the preceding pages (in the case of the additional Ricketson letters) or in this Appendix. I owe the right to use the following correspondence to Mr. E. H. Russell of Worcester and to Dr. S. A. Jones of Ann Arbor, Michigan, who first obtained from the family of Calvin H. Greene of Rochester, Michigan, the Greene letters, six in number, all short, but characteristic. Dr. Jones printed these in a small edition at Jamaica, N. Y., and along with them some letters of Miss Sophia Thoreau to Mr. Greene, and portions of Greene's Diary during his two visits to Concord in September, 1863, and August, 1874. In these papers he left initials, or letters commonly used for unknown quantities, to stand for certain names occurring there. "X" and "X, Y, Z," in this Diary, and in Miss Thoreau's letters, signify Ellery Channing, to whom in March, 1863, Mr. Greene had sent the manzanita cane, headed with buffalo-horn and tipped with silver, which he had made with his own hands and intended for Thoreau, and which Mr. Channing gave to me, as the mutual friend of the two Concord poets. In the Diary I am "Mr. S." This Diary and the letters of Miss Thoreau supply some useful facts for a Thoreau biography, which this collection of Familiar Letters was meant to be, — a biography largely in the words of its subject. Notice is taken of such facts in footnotes.

The earlier letters to Isaac Hecker, afterwards known as Father Hecker of New York, grew out of an acquaintance formed with him while he was living at Mrs. Thoreau's, and taking lessons of the late George Bradford, brother of Mrs. Ripley. They were subsequent to Hecker's brief stay at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, and when he was studying to be a Catholic priest. He cherished the vain hope of converting Thoreau to his own newly acquired faith, amid the influences of Catholic Europe. The brief correspondence is printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* for September, 1902.

Isaac Hecker, born in December, 1819, two and a half years after Thoreau, was the son of a German baker in New York city, and of little education until he came to Massachusetts at the age of twenty-three, as the disciple and friend of Dr. Brownson, then a Protestant preacher and social democrat. In January, 1843, he entered the Brook Farm community, not as a member, but as a worker and student, making the bread for the family and taking lessons of George Ripley, George Bradford, Charles Dana, and John S. Dwight, — all friends of the Concord circle of authors. But he was restless, and yearned for a more ascetic life, and before he had been at Brook Farm a month he was writing to Bronson Alcott about entering the as yet unopened Fruitlands convent, between which and Brook Farm Concord was a half-way station, both physically and spiritually. Hecker tried all three; was at Brook Farm, off and on, for six months, at Fruitlands two weeks (from July 11 to July 25, 1843), and at Concord two months (from April 22 to June 20, 1844). Then, August 1, he was baptized in the Catholic faith at New York. The day before this final step, towards which he had been tending for a year, he wrote to Thoreau, proposing a journey through

Europe on foot and without money. During his brief Concord life he had been a lodger at the house of John Thoreau (the Parkman house, where now the Public Library stands), and had seen Henry Thoreau daily. Hecker thus describes his room, his rent, and his landlady, who was Thoreau's mother:

"All that is needed for my comfort is here, — a room of good size, very good people, furnished and to be kept in order for 75 cents a week, including lights, — wood is extra pay; a good straw bed, a large table, carpet, wash-stand, book-case, stove, chairs, looking-glass, — all, all that is needful. The lady of the house, Mrs. Thoreau, is a *woman*. The only fear I have about her is that she is too much like dear mother, — she will take too much care of me. If you were to see her, Mother, you would be perfectly satisfied that I have fallen into good hands, and met a second mother, if that is possible. I have just finished my dinner, — unleavened bread from home, maple-sugar, and apples which I purchased this morning. Previous to taking dinner I said my first lesson to Mr. Bradford in Greek and Latin."

Hecker "boarded himself," but no doubt often partook of Mrs. Thoreau's hospitality, and took long walks with Thoreau. Writing to him three months after the first meeting at Concord, Hecker said: "I have formed a certain project which your influence has no slight share in forming. It is, to work our passage to Europe, and to walk, work, and beg, if need be, as far, when there, as we are inclined to do."

TO ISAAC HECKER (AT NEW YORK).

CONCORD, August 14, 1844.

FRIEND HECKER, — I am glad to hear your voice from that populous city, and the more so for the tenor of its dis-

course. I have but just returned from a pedestrian excursion somewhat similar to that you propose, *parvis componere magna*, to the Catskill Mountains, over the principal mountains of this State, subsisting mainly on bread and berries, and slumbering on the mountain-tops. As usually happens, I now feel a slight sense of dissipation. Still, I am strongly tempted by your proposal, and experience a decided schism between my outward and inward tendencies. Your method of traveling, especially, — to live along the road, citizens of the world, without haste or petty plans, — I have often proposed this to my dreams, and still do. But the fact is, I cannot so decidedly postpone exploring the *Farther Indies*, which are to be reached, you know, by other routes and other methods of travel. I mean that I constantly return from every external enterprise with disgust, to fresh faith in a kind of Brahminical, Artesian, Inner Temple life. All my experience, as yours probably, proves only this reality. Channing wonders how I can resist your invitation, I, a single man — unfettered — and so do I. Why, there are Roncesvalles, the Cape de Finisterre, and the Three Kings of Cologne; Rome, Athens, and the rest, to be visited in serene, untemporal hours, and all history to revive in one's memory, as he went by the way, with splendors too bright for this world, — I know how it is. But is not here, too, Roncesvalles with greater lustre? Unfortunately, it may prove dull and desultory weather enough here, but better trivial days with faith than the fairest ones lighted by sunshine alone. Perchance, my *Wanderjahr* has not arrived, but you cannot wait for that. I hope you will find a companion who will enter as heartily into your schemes as I should have done.

I remember you, as it were, with the whole Catholic Church at your skirts. And the other day, for a moment, I think I

understood your relation to that body; but the thought was gone again in a twinkling, as when a dry leaf falls from its stem over our heads, but is instantly lost in the rustling mass at our feet.

I am really sorry that the Genius will not let me go with you, but I trust that it will conduct to other adventures, and so, if nothing prevents, we will compare notes at last.

When this invitation reached Concord, Thoreau was absent on a tour with Channing to the Berkshire Mountains and the Catskills, — Channing coming up the Hudson from New York (where he then lived, aiding Horace Greeley in the *Tribune* office), and meeting his friend at the foot of the Hoosac Mountain. On its summit Thoreau had spent the night, sleeping under a board near the observatory tower built by the Williams College students, as related by him in the *Week*. They then crossed the Hudson and journeyed on to the Catskills, returning together to Concord.¹ Meantime Hecker had got impatient, and wrote again, to which Thoreau replied, August 17, thus briefly: —

TO ISAAC HECKER (AT NEW YORK).

I improve the occasion of my mother's sending to acknowledge the receipt of your stirring letter. You have probably

¹ Channing more than once described to me Thoreau's disheveled appearance as he came down the mountain the next morning, after rather a comfortless night. He was carrying for valise a green leather satchel that had been Charles Emerson's, having but recently been the guest of both William and Waldo Emerson. In depicting the scene from the Berkshire mountain, he recurred (in the *Week*) to the homesteads of the Huguenots on Staten Island, where he had rambled the year before this Berkshire experience, while living at William Emerson's and giving lessons to his sons.

received mine by this time. I thank you for not anticipating any vulgar objections on my part. *Far* travel, very *far* travel, or travail, comes near to the worth of staying at home. Who knows whence his education is to come! Perhaps I may drag my anchor at length, or rather, when the *winds* which blow *over* the deep fill my sails, may stand away for distant parts, — for now I seem to have a firm *ground* anchorage, though the harbor is low-shored enough, and the traffic with the natives inconsiderable. I may be away to Singapore by the next tide.

I like well the ring of your last maxim, "It is only the fear of death makes us reason of impossibilities." And but for fear, death itself is an impossibility.

Believe me, I can hardly let it end so. If you do not go soon, let me hear from you again.

Yrs. in great haste,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

Hecker did not in fact go to Europe till a year later, and when he walked over a part of central Europe, it was in company with one or two young Catholic priests, — men very unlike Thoreau.

The short correspondence with Calvin Greene (longer than that with Hecker) occurred at intervals, a dozen years and more after the Fruitlands period, when the Walden experience had been lived through and recorded, and the friendship with the Ricketson family was in its earlier stages. Mr. Greene, when he called on me at his first visit to the Thoreau family in 1863, mentioned that he had just read Thoreau's poem, "The Departure," which at Sophia's request I had lately printed in the Boston *Commonwealth*, a weekly that I had

been editing since Moncure Conway had left Concord for London, in the winter of 1862-63. Greene was a plain, sincere man, never in New England before, who amused Channing by saying he had "taken a boat-ride on the Atlantic." He came once more in 1874, and spent an evening with me in the house where Thoreau lived and died, — Mrs. Thoreau then being dead, and Sophia at Bangor, where she died in 1876.

TO CALVIN H. GREENE (AT ROCHESTER, MICH.).

CONCORD, January 18, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — I am glad to hear that my "Walden" has interested you, — that perchance it holds some truth still as far off as Michigan. I thank you for your note.

The "Week" had so poor a publisher that it is quite uncertain whether you will find it in any shop. I am not sure but authors must turn booksellers themselves. The price is \$1.25. If you care enough for it to send me that sum by mail (stamps will do for change), I will forward you a copy by the same conveyance.

As for the "more" that is to come, I cannot speak definitely at present, but I trust that the mine — be it silver or lead — is not yet exhausted. At any rate, I shall be encouraged by the fact that you are interested in its yield.

Yours respectfully,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, February 10, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — I forwarded to you by mail on the 31st of January a copy of my "Week," post paid, which I trust that you have received. I thank you heartily for the expression

of your interest in "Walden" and hope that you will not be disappointed by the "Week." You ask how the former has been received. It has found an audience of excellent character, and quite numerous, some 2000 copies having been dispersed.¹ I should consider it a greater success to interest one wise and earnest soul, than a million unwise and frivolous.

You may rely on it that you have the best of me in my books, and that I am not worth seeing personally, the stuttering, blundering clod-hopper that I am. Even poetry, you know, is in one sense an infinite brag and exaggeration. Not that I do not stand on all that I have written, — but what am I to the truth I feebly utter?

I like the name of your county.² May it grow men as sturdy as its trees! Methinks I hear your flute echo amid the oaks. Is not yours, too, a good place to study theology? I hope that you will ere long recover your turtle-dove, and that it may bring you glad tidings out of that heaven in which it disappeared.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, May 31, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — I forwarded by mail a copy of my "Week," post paid to James Newberry, Merchant, Rochester, Oakland Co., Mich., according to your order, about ten days ago, or on the receipt of your note.

I will obtain and forward a copy of "Walden" and also of the "Week" to California, to your order, post paid, for \$2.60. The postage will be between 60 and 70 cents.

¹ This was ten times as many in eighteen months as the *Week* sold in five years.

² Mr. Greene lived in Oakland County.

I thank you heartily for your kind intentions respecting me. The West has many attractions for me, particularly the lake country and the Indians, yet I do [not] foresee what my engagements may be in the fall. I have once or twice come near going West a-lecturing, and perhaps some winter may bring me into your neighborhood, in which case I should probably see you. Yet lecturing has commonly proved so foreign and irksome to me, that I think I could only use it to acquire the means with which to make an independent tour another time.

As for my pen, I can say that it is not altogether idle, though I have finished nothing new in the book form. I am drawing a rather long bow, though it may be a feeble one, but I pray that the archer may receive new strength before the arrow is shot.

With many thanks, yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, Saturday, June 21, 1856.

DEAR SIR, — On the 12th I forwarded the two books to California, observing your directions in every particular, and I trust that Uncle Sam will discharge his duty faithfully. While in Worcester this week I obtained the accompanying daguerreotype,¹ which my friends think is pretty good, though better-looking than I.

Books and postage	\$2.64
Daguerreotype50
Postage16
	<hr/>
	3.30

¹ This fixes the date of the Worcester portrait, — June, 1856, two years after the Rowse crayon.

5.00 You will accordingly

3.30

find 1.70 enclosed with my shadow.

Yrs.,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, July 8, 1857.

DEAR SIR, — You are right in supposing that I have not been Westward. I am very little of a traveler. I am gratified to hear of the interest you take in my books; it is additional encouragement to write more of them. Though my pen is not idle, I have not published anything for a couple of years at least. I like a private life, and cannot bear to have the public in my mind.

You will excuse me for not responding more heartily to your notes, since I realize what an interval there always is between the actual and imagined author and feel that it would not be just for *me* to appropriate the sympathy and good will of my unseen readers.

Nevertheless, I should like to meet you, and if I ever come into your neighborhood shall endeavor to do so. Can't you tell the world of your life also? Then I shall know you, at least as well as you me.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

CONCORD, November 24, 1859.

DEAR SIR, — The lectures which you refer to were reported in the newspapers, *after a fashion*, — the last one in some half-dozen of them, — and if I possessed one, or all,

I would send them to you, bad as they are. The best, or at least longest one of the Boston lectures was in the *Boston Atlas and Bee* of November 2d, — maybe half the whole. There were others in the *Traveller*, the *Journal*, etc., of the same date.

I am glad to know that you are interested to see my things, and I wish I had them in printed form to send to you. I exerted myself considerably to get the last discourse printed and sold for the benefit of Brown's family, but the publishers are afraid of pamphlets, and it is now too late.¹

I return the stamps which I have not used.

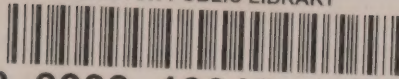
I shall be glad to see you if I ever come your way.

Yours truly,

HENRY D. THOREAU.

¹ This "last discourse" was the long one on John Brown, now included in Thoreau's *Miscellanies*, and formerly in the volume beginning with "A Yankee in Canada."

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